United Nations S/PV.4467

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4467th meeting

Tuesday, 5 February 2002, 9.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The situation in Burundi.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-24214 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of February, I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Mr. Jagdish Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Council for the month of January 2002. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Koonjul for the great diplomatic skill with which he led the work of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I request the Deputy Chief of Protocol to escort Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, to a seat at the Council table.

Major Pierre Buyoya, President of Burundi, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now have the privilege to invite the President of the Republic of Burundi, Major Pierre Buyoya, to make his statement.

President Buyoya (*spoke in French*): May I first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and tell you how certain we are that your country, Mexico, will make an important contribution to the Council's mission of ensuring international peace and security.

Similarly, we welcome the dedication and competence with which Mauritius presided over the Council's work during the month of January. We have noted in particular the holding, during its presidency, of the public debate on conflicts in Africa, a situation of concern to the entire community of nations.

May I extend to you, Mr. President, my heartfelt gratitude for making this meeting possible. This is an excellent opportunity that we will utilize to tell the Council about the prevailing political situation in Burundi. By way of reminder — and it is important to emphasize this — we have opted for peace through dialogue due to our conviction that any other way would lead the country to an impasse. Advocating dialogue in an armed conflict is not always easy, but our responsibility gives us no alternative.

Today we can state — and the Burundian people and the world can attest to this — that, despite remaining difficulties, we have chosen the right option, and that we have achieved satisfactory results. We have the moral strength and the political conviction to go forward so as to create conditions for lasting peace in Burundi. In this statement we will inform the Council of the political climate in Burundi and the stages we have passed through in order to take up the challenges we must face.

The political climate in Burundi has improved considerably, especially following the establishment of transitional institutions. On 1 November 2001, an important date in the Burundi peace process, transitional Government was established in accordance with the Arusha Agreement. All parties and political groups signatories to the Peace Agreement are represented in the Government, with the exception of one political group that preferred not to participate.

The political leaders who had been living in exile — some for more than three decades — have returned to Burundi and are carrying out important political duties within the transitional institutions. This augurs well for even greater movement in the days to come, and refugees are already returning by the hundreds every week.

The other transitional institutions, namely, the National Assembly and the Senate, have also been established.

The beginning of the implementation of the Peace Agreement has created a new situation in Burundi. All former political actors now find themselves side by side in the same institutions to implement the Peace

Agreement they negotiated with such difficulty for almost three years at Arusha.

The quarrels regarding the transitional leadership, which caused so much discord among the political class in Burundi, have ended. Reason has now prevailed, and political forces are now playing their role peacefully. The Burundian population is today relieved to see that the peace process has been brought home and is being led from within the country. The voice of the people of Burundi on the ground will now be better heard by the transitional Government and by the Implementation Monitoring Committee for the Peace Agreement, headquartered in Bujumbura. Our common point of reference today is the Arusha Agreement, a compromise platform that broadly takes into account the concerns of all.

The political horizon for the people of Burundi, including the entire political class of our country, is now brighter. Deadlines have been adhered to closely. Eighteen months from 1 November 2001, there will be a transfer of power at the head of State level. Local elections will be organized, to be followed six months later by legislative elections. Then, to conclude the transition after 36 months, a presidential election will be held.

I am convinced that the institutions in place in Burundi have the political means to begin the necessary reforms. The negotiation and signing of a ceasefire is crucial to speeding up and concluding the needed reform process. An enormous task lies ahead, but we can perform it. The proper functioning of institutions is a guarantee of success. Daily experience testifies to the serious-minded commitment of everyone involved; this gives us grounds for optimism.

Although there are indeed reasons for hope, there are real challenges to the peace process which could compromise our progress towards peace if we fail to find satisfactory solutions in the short term. The first challenge is the continued violence. One characteristic of our peace process is that we negotiated without a ceasefire, signed the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi without a ceasefire and began the Agreement's implementation while rebel violence continued in our country. That was and is a difficult situation to manage. How can we make the population understand that a peace agreement has been signed when violence continues?

For our part, we have decided never to be an obstacle to peace: in the present situation, the negotiation, signing and implementation of the Arusha Agreement has proved to be the best approach. That is surely why we have enjoyed the understanding of the Security Council and of the rest of the international community, which has been tirelessly pressing the Burundian rebels to join the peace process and negotiate a ceasefire with our Government.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to you, Mr. President, and to the institution you represent. The Council's constant appeal to the rebels to lay down their weapons and join the other Barundi on the road to peace constitutes valuable support for the people of Burundi. Last May's visit to Burundi by all the members of the Security Council to Burundi was a memorable moment in our relations with the United Nations. It had a very positive impact on political actors in Burundi and throughout the subregion. We would greatly appreciate a further Security Council visit to Burundi to assess and support our peace process.

The violence that the rebels continue to impose on the Burundian people is a challenge not only to us in Burundi but to the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace. We take this opportunity to repeat our request. The Security Council has the means to make the Burundian rebels renounce violence. If diplomatic means do not succeed, all other means should be used to prevent the rebels from taking the peace process hostage. That process is today guided by a Government that is the outcome of negotiations and that enjoys international legitimacy, as the Security Council acknowledged in a recent statement on Burundi. We also call on other countries of our subregion to halt those who seek to destabilize our country.

Burundi is in a good position to understand that a lack of security in a given country has a harmful impact on that country's neighbours. Peace in the Great Lakes region will come when every country of the region lives in peace. Here, both individual and collective efforts are needed.

The second challenge is to rebuild our country. After eight years of crisis, Burundi's economy has suffered greatly. Let me illustrate this poverty with a few statistics. The number of people living below the poverty line has doubled, rising from 35 per cent of the

population in 1992 to more than 60 per cent today. We bear a heavy external debt burden, with contractual debt-service obligations reaching 98 per cent of our exports, with arrears estimated at more than $112 million, and with debts exceeding 180 per cent of gross domestic product, to mention only a few figures.

Here again, we ask the Security Council to raise the international community's awareness of the need to provide substantial support for our peace effort. The people of Burundi hope for a positive impact from the peace process, and are entitled to expect a better life. Our efforts in this sphere recently achieved success at Geneva, where donors pledged more than $800 million over the next three years. We hope the pledges will be redeemed without further delay, because a catastrophic economic situation is, for us as it is elsewhere, a factor for destabilization and, above all, for despair among our people. Additional inputs are required because great sums will be needed for the repatriation of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons and the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure.

While we in Burundi are concerned with our internal problems, we are following with interest the problems of our subregion, and we are making our modest contribution to anything that could help create a better regional climate. It is crucial to improve bilateral relations with our neighbours, and we are committed to pursuing this process. Our Government is also prepared to play a role in preparations for the regional conference on peace in the Great Lakes region so that it can be held successfully.

I can affirm on behalf of my country that the people, the institutions and the political leaders of Burundi are determined to work more vigorously for peace. We welcome outside contributions, but we know that making peace in Burundi is our own responsibility.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the Republic of Burundi for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, it is my intention to adjourn this meeting and to convene a private meeting between members of the Council and the President of the Republic of Burundi.

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4467*

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Agenda

The situation in Burundi.

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President Buyoya (*spoke in French*): May I first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and tell you how certain we are that your country, Mexico, will make an important contribution to the Council's mission of ensuring international peace and security.

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I can affirm on behalf of my country that the people, the institutions and the political leaders of Burundi are determined to work more vigorously for peace. We welcome outside contributions, but we know that making peace in Burundi is our own responsibility.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the Republic of Burundi for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, it is my intention to adjourn this meeting and to convene a private meeting between members of the Council and the President of the Republic of Burundi.

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4468

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 February 2002

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4468th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 February 2002, at 10.10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 4468th meeting, held in private on 5 February 2002, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'The situation in Burundi'. The President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation to His Excellency Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi.

"The members of the Council and the President of the Republic of Burundi had a constructive discussion."

02-24249 (E) 050202

United Nations S/PV.4469

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4469th meeting

Wednesday, 6 February 2002, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Latona
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

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02-24347 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Brahimi to take a seat at the Council table.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: I am very happy to join the Security Council today. I have come to share some thoughts about my recent visit to Asia. If you agree, Sir, Mr. Brahimi will then provide a more detailed briefing on the situation on the ground in Afghanistan.

My trip took me to Japan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Qatar. In Japan, I met with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and attended the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan. In Pakistan, I met with President Musharraf and Foreign Minister Sattar and attended the Pakistan Forum On Human Development. In Afghanistan, I met with Chairman Karzai and members of the Interim Administration, as well as with representatives of civil society and women's group, and received a briefing from General McColl of the International Security Assistance Force. In Iran, I met with Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, as well as with President Khatami, Foreign Minister Kharrazi and the Speaker of the Parliament. Finally, I met with the Emir of Qatar.

With respect to Afghanistan, as I said, we will get more information from Mr. Brahimi, but the situation there was, of course, the main focus of my discussions throughout the region. I was greatly encouraged in Tokyo by the donations that were pledged — $4.5 billion for five years — and expressed strong support for the political process emanating from Bonn. Chairman Karzai stressed his firm commitment to transparency and accountability in the use of all aid and made clear his understanding that the role of the international community is to help the Afghans help themselves. I see that Mrs. Ogata, who chaired the meeting, is here with us this morning.

At the same time, as we analyse the pledges, we can see some critical gaps. The conference focused on long-term needs, but the Afghan Interim Administration needs money today, for example, to pay the salaries of public servants. Indeed, help is desperately needed right now. The international community must rise to the challenge today and then stay engaged for the long haul.

Security was the number one preoccupation of everyone we met in Afghanistan. Indeed, the security situation remains precarious and, without security, reconstruction will not be possible and donors will not be able to disburse the money they have so generously pledged.

The second main concern was the need for the Interim Administration to have the resources to pay public servants. Without resources, the Administration will quickly lose credibility and will be unable to extend its authority elsewhere in the country, thereby undermining the chances of success for the longer-term peace process.

Mr. Brahimi will brief the Council in greater detail about each of these issues.

One key element in Afghanistan's recovery will be the support of its neighbours. President Musharraf, for his part, was firm in his commitment to working with the Interim Administration and the United Nations. He invited Chairman Karzai and other members of the Interim Administration to visit Pakistan, and I conveyed that message to the Afghan authorities. President Musharraf also promised to take action against any Taliban or Al Qaeda personnel found in Pakistan and to ensure that Pakistani territory would not be used by Afghans interested in subverting the central Administration in Kabul. The President also made it clear that a stable Afghanistan was in Pakistan's national interest and that of the wider region.

Iran, too, is committed to strengthening the authority of the Interim Administration. Iran, which

like Pakistan has hosted many refugees for many years and has long had trade and other contacts with Afghanistan, also recognizes the national interest in a stable Afghanistan. The Iranian authorities also said they would not tolerate the presence of Taliban or Al Qaeda personnel on its territory.

Both Iran and Pakistan pledged to work with each other and with Afghanistan's other neighbours as we move ahead. Such a regional approach holds great promise, and I intend it to be a major pillar of United Nations strategy in confronting this challenge.

I also had a chance to talk in Islamabad with President Musharraf about relations between India and Pakistan. The President was very concerned about the military build-up and expressed his readiness for dialogue. He also reiterated his commitment, made in his courageous speech of 12 January, to take strong measures against extremist armed groups.

For my part, I stressed the need not only for immediate military de-escalation, but also for a sustained and determined dialogue aimed at resolving this situation, so that there will not be another crisis in a few weeks' or a few months' time. Towards that end, I renewed my offer of good offices, should both parties wish to avail themselves of them.

Another subject of great concern in Iran and Qatar, and in my talks with Secretary Powell on the margins of the Tokyo conference, was the downward spiral of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. We need to find a way to get the parties back to the negotiating table, where all issues should be addressed — terrorism as well as the occupation. Without this wider political context, and without some alleviation of the humanitarian plight of the Palestinians, I fear that progress will be nearly impossible and the risk of further violence all too great.

Mr. Larsen briefed the Council last week on this issue, and I will continue to do my utmost in helping to find new ways to break what is clearly a very dangerous impasse.

In conclusion, I know that everyone is looking forward to hearing from Lakhdar Brahimi, and I want to end here. He and his team have done remarkable work. Indeed, everywhere I went on this visit, United Nations staff were a constant source of inspiration. Despite extremely arduous conditions, their commitment is steadfast, and the breadth of their work is truly breathtaking. They are playing a key role in helping the people of Afghanistan to seize this unique moment of opportunity, and they merit our continued support.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Council, I thank the Secretary-General for the information he has provided us about his trip to Asia and his conversations with leaders in the region.

I now call on Mr. Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

Mr. Brahimi: It is an honour, Sir, to come back to brief the Council, and a privilege and a pleasure to take the floor under your presidency. May I express to you and to the new members of the Council my very best wishes for the two years they are going to serve this body.

Since the transfer of power in Afghanistan on 22 December, the Interim Administration, under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, has been working to establish itself as the central Government in Afghanistan. Obviously, it has encountered many obstacles, including the absence of trained personnel, the destruction of ministry premises, and the lack of equipment, including telephones and the other basic necessities that any administration requires in order to function properly.

However, progress has been made, and most ministries are starting to carry out their responsibilities. One of the most important achievements of the Administration was the payment of civil service salaries as of 22 January, that is, for the very first month of the Administration's existence. This went a long way towards enhancing the Administration's credibility.

The contributions made to the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, administered by the United Nations Development Programme, were instrumental in enabling the Administration to pay salaries on time. We are very grateful to all of the Governments that have paid into the Fund, but a much larger sum of money will be required in order to ensure that the Interim Administration can continue to pay salaries in the coming months and provide the bare minimum that peoples everywhere routinely expect of their Government.

The Tokyo conference, as the Secretary-General just said, was extremely well attended at a high level,

and the pledges made were substantial. The commitment that was shown by the international community was encouraging, but I cannot overemphasize the need for the pledges to be followed up, on an urgent basis, by actual contributions. The Interim Administration can count only on the generosity of the international community to help it find the means with which to begin the reconstruction of the country as soon as possible. Everyone understands how important it is to avoid a situation in which a large quantity of funds are said to be available in future, but very little is actually in hand for the urgent work that needs to be done now.

As the Secretary-General has just stated, security is, indeed, the main preoccupation of the population in Afghanistan. Flashpoints still exist throughout the country, and tensions flare up periodically, instilling fear in the population that peace will not last. Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, the situation remains calm.

Last week, tensions erupted both in the east and in the north. In Mazar-e-Sharif, two of the main factions moved troops into the city, and there were indications that a serious military conflict could take place. On 1 February, a joint mediation effort by the Interim Administration and the United Nations led to the renewal of a demilitarization agreement, in which unauthorized bases and posts were redeployed outside the city and security was placed in the hands of a joint police force. This was a significant development, although there are still unconfirmed reports of armed clashes outside the city.

The conflict in Gardez, in the east, has not been settled yet, although the military clashes ceased on 2 February. There are indications that the forces of one of the factions are currently deployed outside the town, with heavy weapons, and are threatening to attack again.

These clashes demonstrate that the peace in Afghanistan is still fragile. At the same time, the visible presence of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in the capital has led to an improvement in the security situation in Kabul. This has led to increasingly vocal demands by ordinary Afghans, as well as by members of the Interim Administration and even warlords, for the expansion of ISAF to the rest of the country. We tend to agree with these demands, and we hope that these will receive favourable and urgent consideration by the Security Council.

In the medium and long term, however, it is the creation of a truly national police and army that will be critical to improving and stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan.

A very useful meeting took place in the margins of the Tokyo conference precisely to discuss international support for the reform of the security sector. With regard to the police, the Afghan authorities have asked the German Government for training and assistance, and we strongly supported that request. As a result, a German delegation visited Kabul last month and made a preliminary assessment of the needs. A meeting is now scheduled to take place in Berlin on 13 February to discuss the specific needs of the Afghan police and the ways in which different Governments can assist. In the meantime, the United Kingdom has agreed to provide, through ISAF, £190,000 for communications and other basic equipment to the police in Kabul for their most immediate needs.

The creation of a national army is also a priority, and the international community will be called upon to provide assistance in terms of training, salaries, and so forth. For now, ISAF has undertaken to train a national guard battalion of 600 soldiers, beginning on 26 February — a most welcome initiative, which will, I am sure, show that helping Afghanistan to form a national army can be done. I also hope that the international community will pay attention to the need to help all those who participated in Afghanistan's many wars over the past quarter of a century to return to civilian life in dignity. In Afghanistan, as in most post-conflict situations, helping in the reintegration of former combatants is an essential part of the peace process.

I would like to emphasize the fact that the population of Afghanistan has very high expectations that the Interim Administration will bring about swift and significant improvements in the security situation. The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defence have urged that international assistance to the police and army, respectively, be forthcoming as soon as possible, and I share the view that we cannot afford to react slowly on this issue; time really is of the essence.

The United Nations relief activities also illustrate the disparate security situation in various parts of the

country. Relief efforts continue to gather momentum, and access to several areas that were only recently considered to be unsafe is improving. During the month of January, for example, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization were able to distribute 6,000 tons of food in Kandahar alone. Relief workers have also gained access to several districts in Konar and Laghman provinces and to the road between Jalalabad and Kabul, enabling international staff to travel from Peshawar to Kabul by road. A city-wide distribution effort began in Mazar-e-Sharif yesterday — the third such distribution this year, after those in Herat and Kabul.

Work on a more systematic assessment of needs is also gearing up. Rapid assessments of internally displaced persons and of communities likely to be a focus for return are ongoing and, in some cases, nearing completion. This week, the World Food Programme is deploying six helicopters to launch rapid assessment missions in areas that are difficult to access by road, in particular to investigate reports of food shortages and even of famine — as some members may have seen on television — in remote areas in central west Afghanistan.

Despite encouraging developments, insecurity is continuing to hamper relief efforts in many parts of the country. Three entire provinces in the east — Paktia, Khost and Paktika — remain practically off-limits for humanitarian workers. The same applies to numerous districts in south-western Afghanistan, where several main roads remain extremely dangerous. The only remaining access road from Kabul to Bamiyan, for example, has been blocked by tensions in the area of Ghorbund.

Additionally, the tensions in Mazar-e-Sharif almost led to the evacuation of United Nations staff last week, while the situation in Gardez actually did force the evacuation of United Nations local staff, who have not yet been able to return. Even in areas that are considered relatively safe, such as Herat and Kabul, the security environment for relief workers remains quite fragile.

Insecurity is also continuing to have a serious impact on population movements, both as a cause for further displacement and as a major disincentive for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Insecurity will become even more relevant and worrying when large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons will want to return to their homes in March and April for the planting season.

Many of the returnees who have come back to the country — a total of some 105,000 people in January — have been moving to urban areas that they consider safe, in particular to Kabul and Herat, instead of going to their areas of origin, thus putting even more pressure on the very meagre service capacities of those cities. At the same time, Afghans seeking refuge in Pakistan are still arriving at the Chaman border crossing. Reports of discrimination against Pashtun minorities in the north and the continued presence of arms in some concentrations of internally displaced persons are of great concern to all of us.

The Bonn Agreement provided for the formation of a Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga within one month after the transfer of power. This was one of the main preoccupations of the Interim Administration and the United Nations during January. The composition of the Commission was announced by Chairman Karzai in the presence of the Secretary-General during his visit to Kabul on 25 January. All 21 members have accepted membership in the Commission, and the group began its work on 29 January. The Commission is meeting every day, and it will be inaugurated officially by Chairman Karzai tomorrow.

The Commission has confirmed its intention to hold the emergency Loya Jirga within the five-month time frame set forth in the Bonn Agreement and to consult widely within the country in order to ensure that the Loya Jirga is representative of all segments of the Afghan population. A very strong effort was made to ensure that the members of the Loya Jirga were as independent as possible, and the composition of the Commission has generally been well received by the people of Afghanistan.

At the same time, the United Nations assisted in putting together a proposal for the re-establishment of a Civil Service Commission, including the preparation of a list of possible candidates to serve on it. That proposal is now with the Interim Administration, which is expected to act on it shortly and make the Civil Service Commission a reality.

With the establishment of the Loya Jirga Commission within the time frame mandated by Bonn, and with the Civil Service Commission on its way, two of the critical milestones in the peace process have

been successfully met. We now intend to focus our efforts on assisting the Interim Administration in the formation of the other two Commissions provided for in Bonn — the Judicial Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

I should now like to say a few words about the structure of the United Nations mission. This is, of course, one of our major preoccupations, because we need to finalize the structure of the future mission in Afghanistan as soon as possible. There have been long debates on this issue within the Integrated Mission Task Force and the United Nations Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs here in New York as well as among the various agencies in the field. We are now close to a consensus on the structure. It will be an integrated mission that will operate with a "light footprint", keeping the international United Nations presence to the minimum required, while our Afghan colleagues are given as much of a role as possible. My discussions both in Kabul and in New York indicate that there is agreement within the United Nations on this approach.

Mr. Nigel Fisher, who has been appointed by the Secretary-General as Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan, will play an important role in bringing together the various parts of the United Nations system engaged in relief, reconstruction and recovery work and in ensuring that we work in tandem with the vision and objectives of the Interim Administration.

In the near future, the Secretary-General will also appoint another Deputy Special Representative to replace Mr. Vendrell, who has retired after a long and distinguished career at the United Nations and participated with distinction and dedication in the Organization's ongoing effort to help the people of Afghanistan out of their long and difficult crisis.

It seems that Bonn took place a very long time ago, but in fact it did not. The agreement was reached only on 5 December, exactly two months ago. The Interim Administration is settling in, and Chairman Karzai has become a familiar figure all over the world. Yet this Administration was inaugurated only on 22 December, a mere six or seven weeks ago.

Afghanistan has gone some way on the road towards peace and stability, but that road is still very long and fraught with danger. The Afghan people are tired — indeed, exhausted — because of the conflicts that have destroyed their country and threatened the very existence of their nation. They want peace, and they know that they still need the support of their friends and neighbours as well as the support of the international community as a whole. Even the most modest among them know that in mobilizing and channelling that help, the United Nations has a central role to play.

The Secretary-General was able to see and hear some of these expectations in the discussions he had in Kabul with Chairman Karzai and his colleagues, as well as in his talks with civil society and during his visit to a school for girls. I think that he also saw them as soon as he landed at Kabul airport, where he was met by a team of deminers, those heroic workers who are trying to cleanse their land of the most painful reminder of the terrible wars that Afghanistan has endured.

Our hope, and that of the people of Afghanistan, is that the international community in general and the United Nations in particular will stand by the people of Afghanistan, as the Secretary-General said, for the long haul.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Brahimi for the information he has provided. As President, I recognize the immense effort that the complex circumstances in Afghanistan have required of him in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I congratulate him, the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and the Secretary-General on their work.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4470

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4470th meeting

Thursday, 7 February 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Siv

Agenda

Briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

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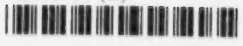

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ruud Lubbers, High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Lubbers to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, High Commissioner for Refugees. After the briefing, I shall give the floor to Council members who wish to comment or ask questions.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lubbers.

Mr. Lubbers: Mr. President, thank you for inviting me to brief the Security Council.

Let me begin with 11 September. Resolution 1373 (2001) calls on States to work together to prevent and suppress terrorist acts and to prevent terrorists from gaining admission to countries by illegally abusing the asylum system. This is entirely consistent with the 1951 Refugee Convention, which specifically excludes persons who have committed serious crimes.

Therefore, perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of terrorist crimes who might seek to abuse the asylum channel have to be promptly identified and dealt with. At the same time, let me add words of caution. In taking measures, we must ensure that Governments avoid making unwarranted linkages between refugees and terrorism. Genuine refugees are themselves the victims of persecution and terrorism, not its perpetrators. Innocent people should not be deprived of their basic rights.

Refugees and asylum seekers have for some years been the object of considerable mistrust and hostility in many countries, and they are now particularly vulnerable. In the current climate, there is a risk that refugees and asylum seekers may become convenient scapegoats and may be unfairly victimized. We must not allow this to happen. We must continue to fight against xenophobia and intolerance in our societies.

We must not allow the global fight against terrorism to weaken the international refugee protection regime. Refugees and asylum seekers must not be discriminated against; one must not assume too easily that their religion, ethnicity, national origin or political affiliation somehow link them to terrorism. Governments must avoid resorting to the mandatory or arbitrary detention of asylum seekers and to procedures that do not comply with the standards of due process. Detention of asylum seekers must remain the exception, not the rule. Resettlement programmes and solutions must be maintained and must not discriminate against people of particular ethnic groups or nationalities.

In November last year my Office issued a document outlining these concerns and providing practical suggestions on how to ensure that applicable international standards relating to refugee protection are met. Since then, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been called upon by Governments to provide its expertise in helping to draft new regulations aimed at avoiding abuse of the asylum channel by terrorists and other criminals. UNHCR stands ready to continue cooperating with States in this respect, to ensure that standards of refugee protection are respected.

There are currently more than 21 million refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless people and others of concern to my Office. I am determined in particular to make progress in finding durable solutions for those people. In many countries, it can be done. The first challenge is to ensure that the international community remains fully committed to supporting political processes aimed at ending conflict.

Let me turn to the Afghan situation. As the Council is aware, even before 11 September, Afghans constituted the largest refugee population in the world, with some 3.5 million in Pakistan and Iran alone, and

many others spread out in countries across the world. In the last few months, in spite of the insistence of Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries on keeping their borders with Afghanistan officially closed, UNHCR encouraged them to provide temporary protection for the most vulnerable.

Some 300,000 Afghans have entered those two countries since 11 September. We have succeeded in ensuring that their basic needs are met. Beyond this, in Pakistan, considerable progress has been made in transferring refugees from makeshift camps to more secure areas with better living conditions. It is particularly gratifying to note that the notorious Jalozai camp, where conditions have been particularly bad, is about to close. This is indeed an incredible improvement if one compares the situation to the one that prevailed only a year ago.

Inside Afghanistan, the number of internally displaced people was estimated to be around 1 million in December, bringing the total number of displaced Afghans to around 5 million — one fifth of the population. Now, with the new Interim Administration in place under Chairman Karzai, and with international troops on the ground, we will address the massive problem of human displacement.

My Office is fully committed to playing an active role, within the United Nations operation and under the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi, to help build peace in the country, enabling refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. The UNHCR initial return plan describes our regional approach to the Afghan situation, outlining the preparations that we are making for the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.

It is difficult to estimate at this stage the magnitude of the return movement and the speed at which it will take place, but our initial plan is to assist up to 1.2 million returnees in 2002: 400,000 from Pakistan, 400,000 from Iran and approximately 400,000 internally displaced persons — all going home. This is a substantial return operation. In fact, for the Afghans I will now be the "High Commissioner for Returnees", and that is a gratifying experience.

Security, as the Council is aware, is now the most important condition for significant returns. The majority of the 5 million refugees are from countryside. It is therefore vital to have adequate security throughout the country, not only in Kabul and the main urban centres. I am therefore concerned about the deteriorating security situation in various parts of Afghanistan. The recent violence in Paktia province has been widely reported. In Balkh province tension between rival factions has resulted in serious clashes in at least two areas, with atrocities against civilians — including killings and rape — reported in Sholgara. In Mazar-e-Sharif, in spite of General Dostum's disarmament campaign, armed men from rival factions have flowed back into the city in the past few weeks, and they are visible in the streets right now.

The issue of security is crucial. Events such as those in Paktia and Balkh provinces, and ethnic tension in general in the north of the country, including Baghlan province, are a deterrent to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. At the same time, they also prevent our access for humanitarian operations. If the security situation continues to deteriorate, Afghanistan will slide back into a 1992-like situation. I therefore strongly support the position taken here by Lakhdar Brahimi yesterday to extend the mandate of the international security assistance force beyond Kabul.

Since the end of November, in Pakistan over 100,000 Afghan refugees are estimated to have already been repatriated. While that repatriation continues, the influx from Afghanistan into Pakistan has not come to a halt. We are talking about thousands fleeing from Afghanistan daily. While the lack of sufficient assistance is being cited as the main reason for persons continuing to flee Afghanistan, recent arrivals — particularly from the north — have increasingly referred to discrimination against Pashtuns. This is a worrying development. I hereby make a strong plea for tolerance, non-discrimination and reconciliation in the new Afghanistan.

In Iran over 65,000 refugees are estimated to have been repatriated voluntarily since the end of November, and spontaneous returns are continuing at the rate of about 700 per day. But, in addition, the Government has been deporting substantial numbers of Afghans. UNHCR continues to request access to those deportees to establish whether or not there are any refugees among them.

Although the international spotlight has been on Afghanistan, Africa continues to demand the greatest share of UNHCR's resources and attention. Out of 21 million people of concern to my Office, more than 5

million are in Africa. A considerable number of them have been languishing for years in refugee camps.

In December of last year, UNHCR organized a ministerial-level meeting in Geneva to discuss these problems in Africa. It was made clear at that meeting that opportunities are arising to put an end to some of Africa's protracted refugee situations. Those opportunities must be seized.

Turning now to Sierra Leone, a year ago, following my first visit to the country, I briefed the Security Council on humanitarian issues there. Since then there has been much progress, and repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees has now begun in earnest. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone's successful completion of the disarmament process has greatly contributed to stability in the country. UNHCR did its part, and the Government's declaration that the war has officially ended is also a welcome development. Now that the war is over, it is vital to build the peace. My Office is actively engaged in facilitating the return of refugees from Guinea, and we will soon start facilitating similar returns from other countries of asylum, particularly Liberia, the Gambia and Ghana. The return of refugees is essential for successful and legitimate elections. Meanwhile, the deteriorating situation in Liberia is of great concern. New Liberian refugees are already arriving in Sierra Leone, and it is vital that every effort be made to contain the situation in Liberia.

Eritrea is another example of where considerable numbers of refugees are returning after many years of exile. The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea plays a vital role there. Over the last year, some 36,000 refugees have been repatriated voluntarily from the Sudan, and recently the momentum has picked up even more. While most of those persons are refugees who fled Eritrea during the conflict with Ethiopia in 2000, some of them are refugees who had been living in camps since the 1960s and 1970s. We intend to complete the repatriation exercise by 2003. However, we will then have to work on Eritrea's absorption capacity, where there are some concerns.

Another successful repatriation operation is that involving 50,000 refugees returning from Ethiopia to north-west and north-east Somalia. Those numbers may be modest in comparison with the total numbers of refugees in Africa — we are talking about all the examples now — but they are significant in emphasizing the need to find solutions to very protracted refugee situations. The challenge of course is to make sure that those returns are sustainable. I must therefore encourage development actors to invest in areas of return so that returnees can rebuild their lives and engage in productive activities.

As the Council knows, there are some hopeful signs in the Great Lakes region. The situation in Burundi was reviewed by the Security Council earlier this week, with the personal participation of President Buyoya. Nelson Mandela's previous efforts and the efforts currently being made by Deputy President Zuma of South Africa and President Omar Bongo of Gabon to broker a ceasefire between the parties to the conflict are positive developments. In the event of an effective ceasefire, I anticipate that hundreds of thousands of refugees in Tanzania and elsewhere will voluntarily return. Currently, some 600,000 Burundians are living as refugees in East, Central and southern Africa, while a further 600,000 remain internally displaced in Burundi. This is a massive operation. Last year saw a modest beginning, with 30,000 refugees going back to the northern provinces of Burundi. That is an indication that refugees are ready and willing to return as soon as it is safe to do so.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) last year was a positive step forward. Another concrete, positive element was the separation of 1,400 ex-combatants who fled from the Central African Republic to the Democratic Republic of the Congo together with some 24,000 refugees. But, in general, lack of access remains one of the main challenges facing UNHCR in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I therefore hope that the further deployment of MONUC in the country will lead to improved access. Beyond that, of course, we are looking forward to the too-long delayed inter-Congolese dialogue finally beginning on 25 February. Should that political process be successful, a withdrawal of all foreign forces from the eastern part of the country may lead to a large-scale return of refugees from Tanzania and Zambia. So there are prospects but it is still very difficult.

Africa must remain a top priority. The international community cannot afford to neglect its chronic problems of poverty, conflict and instability.

Neither can it afford to ignore the refugees that these conflicts have generated.

Let me give one example. Western Sahara is an example of a protracted refugee situation where there are few immediate prospects for durable solutions and where humanitarian assistance and protection for the refugees remains under-funded. It is unacceptable that in a long-term protracted situation our activities should be under-funded.

Africa's leaders have committed themselves to putting the continent back on the path to peace, political stability, economic prosperity and sustainable development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) deserves full support. Currently, the NEPAD initiative contains no specific provisions for refugees and returnees. Therefore, my Office is working closely with the African Union to ensure that this issue is adequately addressed within the NEPAD framework. I am pleased to note that G-8 countries are supportive of NEPAD, and I hope that their interest will be reflected also at the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held at Monterrey in March. The integration of refugees and returnees into the African economy and into the reconstruction process is key. It should also be of interest to the Security Council: without such integration, refugee populations will be a breeding ground for new problems.

In the Balkans, we are often quick to describe the problems. But we should not forget that there have also been some important success stories. Democratic Governments have replaced authoritarian regimes in Croatia and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and more than 2 million people who were forced to flee their homes during the wars of the last decade have returned to their homes. Still, many challenges lie ahead.

Serbia continues to host 230,000 ethnic Serbs and members of other minorities who fled Kosovo, as well as 390,000 refugees from earlier conflicts. All together, that constitutes the largest single refugee community in Europe. In spite of all our efforts to facilitate returns, many of those people are likely to have to stay. The Government has recognized the problem and is working on a strategy for the needed local integration, which of course will succeed only if jobs are created and public housing is provided. It is good that this is understood. Thus, we are working on two tracks: integration for those who cannot return; and very active action to promote returns where possible. In southern Serbia, UNHCR has played an active role in preventing new violence. I refer in particular to the mixed police force.

In Kosovo itself there has been some limited progress. In September 2001, we facilitated the first return of Serbs to Kosovo after more than two years of displacement. The number is still very small, but the significance is greater. It sent a political signal that was important for the peaceful conclusion of the elections last year. However, the problem is not with the election; the problem is in the countryside, where local Government structures still have not sufficiently changed their attitude. Therefore, there is still instability. The continued displacement and isolation of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Roma and members of other minority groups remains a real concern. Local leaders are still failing to make it possible at present for members of minorities to lead a normal life in the province.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, my Office continues to work alongside European monitors and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in conflict-affected areas to help build confidence between communities. More than 80 per cent of the 170,000 people who were displaced last year have now returned to their homes. But unless progress is made in implementing the Framework Agreement of 13 August 2001, there will be a serious risk of further unrest and population displacement. The Government's recent adoption of the law on self-government is an encouraging step in the right direction, but it needs to be implemented as soon as possible.

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, more refugees and internally displaced persons have been able to go home to areas controlled by opposing ethnic factions over the past year. We are talking about 100,000 in 2001. That is the highest number to date. Still, significant problems remain. We are speaking about 800,000 people from these countries who have not been able to return to their former homes and who have not yet found a durable solution. Property repossession is the single most important issue affecting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons in both Bosnia and Croatia. UNHCR is focusing its efforts on ensuring that local authorities implement property laws and assist with the reconstruction of properties destroyed by the war.

We thus see that throughout the Balkan region the needs are shifting from emergency relief to development. But just at the time when international financial support is most needed, the amount of money available appears to be diminishing. It is crucial that we do not allow donor fatigue to jeopardize the significant progress which has been made in the Balkans towards resolving the problem of displacement. Many refugees and internally displaced persons find themselves returning to rural areas, where they face considerable difficulties in their economic and social reintegration. Unemployment continues to affect a high proportion of returnees, making job creation an urgent priority. International financial support continues to be sorely needed in this process.

Let me move further east from South-East Europe and say a few words about Georgia. I greatly welcome the Security Council's recent call on the parties to the conflict to reduce the level of tension on both sides of the ceasefire line, building on the protocol presented by Mr. Dieter Boden, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Georgia. Without a commitment by the parties to ensure the security of the civilian population, progress in meeting humanitarian needs will remain very limited.

We are approaching 20 May 2002, independence day for East Timor. I am pleased to say that almost 194,000 East Timorese refugees have successfully been repatriated from West Timor. The challenge now is to find durable solutions for the remaining 70,000 East Timorese refugees. There are indications that the militias in West Timor no longer have such a firm grip on the camp populations, but there are still a number of factors inhibiting returns. There is the issue of Indonesian Government pension payments, and there is the problem of the lack of adequate housing in East Timor. These very practical problems have to be solved to ensure that the remaining 70,000, or at least most of them, can return home. These problems have to be addressed urgently, because it is my intention to complete voluntary repatriation before independence day. UNHCR is not in a position to stay there month after month, year after year. Here, independence means that people can go home.

Let me mention another signal of hope in another part of the globe: in Mexico. In Mexico, the Government has in the last few years naturalized more than 6,000 Guatemalan refugees who chose not to repatriate, providing a successful example of local integration. The state government of Quintana Roo has also recently donated a substantial amount of land for these former refugees, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring the sustainability of this local integration.

It would be gratifying to cover the whole world, but I must come to a close. At the end of 2000, my Office launched the Global Consultations on International Protection in order to reflect on how to revitalize the international framework for refugee protection set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and to assist States to address the current humanitarian challenges. One thing which became clear was that there is still an enormous commitment to protect refugees but that there is also a need for more practical burden-sharing.

The unique consultative process — the Global Consultations — have brought together representatives of States from all regions of the world, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and so forth, as well as refugees themselves. This process will generate an agenda for protection, which will serve as a guide for years to come.

As part of this process, on 12 and 13 December last year a Ministerial Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention took place in Geneva. It was a rather special event — the first such gathering of States parties in 50 years. It was opened by the President of the General Assembly and attended by 162 States, including 76 represented at ministerial level. The gathering adopted a landmark declaration of States parties, which breaks new ground in a number of areas. It specifically emphasizes the need to ensure respect for the rights and freedoms of refugees, for international cooperation to resolve their plight and for action to address the causes of refugee movements and to prevent them from becoming a source of tension between States.

Let me conclude by making it very clear, in relation to the Council's responsibilities, that refugees are the consequences of conflict and persecution and of a lack of security. But that is not the whole story. As a consequence of the deficiencies in our political systems, we need durable solutions for these refugees — repatriation, local integration or resettlement. If these solutions are not provided, refugee camps and populations will become breeding grounds for despair, and refugees in despair go on the

move. In fact, they fuel human trafficking and criminal networks. Youngsters will be tempted to become, once again, partners of agents of violence. The Security Council, therefore, must also be aware of that.

It is not only a question of prevention in relation to refugees; we must also find durable solutions and call on nations to assist in that endeavour. In fact, if solutions are not provided, we are talking about a ticking time bomb. When we provide solutions, they act as some of the most effective instruments to push back and put a halt to these crimes, which are on the rise. Solutions are among the most important instruments to prevent new violence. They are, indeed, a key factor in achieving the goal of security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lubbers for the realistic perspective and the information that he has provided to the Council. I would like to congratulate him and his staff on the dedicated humanitarian work that they have been doing to benefit the 21 million refugees throughout the world.

I will now call on Council members for their comments or questions relating to Mr. Lubbers' statement. In order to make this meeting more interactive, I will call on several Council members before reverting to Mr. Lubbers for his response.

Mr. Siv (United States): Let me first thank the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Lubbers, for a very informative briefing. We believe that it is important for the Council to keep abreast of refugee and humanitarian issues, which have a significant bearing on international peace and security in many parts of the world. We appreciate the fact that the High Commissioner has shared his views with us. Let me assure him of my Government's support for refugee assistance and for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As we enter the second half-century of the existence of both the UNHCR and the Refugee Convention, it is important that we in the international community reaffirm our commitment to the protection and care of refugees and that we provide to UNHCR the support that it needs.

For its part, the United States is a committed partner. Regrettably, UNCHR remains constantly underfunded and has been obliged to move to a resource-based budget. It is not acceptable to us that some refugees, particularly in Africa, are not receiving acceptable standards of care. It is not only UNHCR that is short-funded; the World Food Programme is beset by problems stemming from inadequate donor support and breaks in the food pipeline. Refugees in some areas go for unacceptable periods of time without food supplies. The United States will continue to provide its fair share of funding.

We were interested to hear the High Commissioner's views on the impact of 11 September and counter-terrorism measures. While the United States has undertaken new measures to protect our national security, we cannot and will not permit the tragic events of 11 September to compromise our long-standing tradition of providing refuge to those in need. We must make sure, however, that terrorists are not allowed to take advantage of the refugee protection system. In our view, this can be prevented through the scrupulous application of the exceptions to refugee protection available under current law. We stand ready to work with UNHCR to ensure that refugee status, determination procedures and registration methods take into account the new security measures to combat terrorism.

In this vein, we again highlight the fact that the security of refugee camps remains a key issue. We need to ensure that refugees are protected from attacks, from hostage-taking, from recruitment and from sexual and gender-based violence. We also remain concerned about the security of humanitarian workers, but we welcome the steps taken to enhance coordination between United Nations agencies and the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator.

Today it is our hope that in Afghanistan, the millions of refugees who fled so many years ago will eventually be able to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, when security conditions permit. It is important that, as part of the reconstruction effort, we focus on preparing for return. We look forward to learning more about UNHCR's assessments of return areas and preparations to ensure that assistance will be timely and adequate.

We are pleased that in Western Sahara, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has funded two UNHCR international positions for the operation there. We also strongly support UNHCR's plans to build confidence between the two sides.

We are still keenly concerned about the range of refugee situations in Africa. We welcome the prospects for voluntary return in safety and dignity but caution

against premature and, therefore, destabilizing repatriation. We are pleased with the progress towards peace in Sierra Leone. We continue to support efforts to facilitate the return of refugees, and we have expressed a firm desire to see all of them repatriated. We recognize that for many, the time is not yet right. We are also concerned about the ongoing instability in northern Liberia, where tens of thousands of Liberians and several thousand Sierra Leonean refugees have been uprooted.

We encourage the High Commissioner's interest in looking at ways to address protracted refugee situations, to make the most of refugees' resources and contributions and to view them as assets rather than liabilities. We urge refugee-hosting countries to include refugees in their poverty reduction and development plans.

As a former refugee, I would like to express my particular appreciation to those countries that have provided refuge to the millions forced to flee, not only in South Asia but also in Africa, Asia and South-Eastern Europe. Their generous hospitality and their contribution to the international effort are not adequately recognized.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank Mr. Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for the excellent presentation he has provided us with today. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Lubbers and the Government of Switzerland on the success of the first meeting of the Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1961 Protocol, which was held in December in Geneva.

As this is a meeting that gives us an opportunity to ask questions and make comments, I should like to offer a few brief comments of my own and then address a couple of questions to Mr. Lubbers.

First, I believe that we have received a very clear message from Mr. Lubbers that the fight against international terrorism cannot and must not be incompatible with the right to seek refuge. In this respect, the Security Council faces an enormous challenge.

Secondly, it is essential that solidarity concerning this issue, which has existed since 1951, be kept intact. This solidarity requires political support, resistance against the fear that may be generated by terrorist acts, resources in an environment of increasing scarcity, and fulfilment of simple commitments such as subscribing unreservedly to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, in cases in which this has not yet been done. This solidarity permeates the entire agenda of the Security Council and is not confined to a few issues, notwithstanding the focus of attention of the international media.

Thirdly, in all cases security is essential, and Mr. Lubbers has referred very explicitly to this fact. We understand that it is fundamental that secure conditions exist, not only for the return of refugees but also for all humanitarian responses, both in countries of origin and in countries of destination. However, the issue of security conditions does not apply only to Afghanistan. We must also bring this perspective prominently to all our discussions, particularly those related to Africa, where the needs are great but there is often far less practical interest on the part of the international community and fewer possibilities of generating a solid international response backed by resources.

My final comment involves the individual and collective commitment of every member of the Council to the political resolution of all conflicts. That is the best way to achieve the return of refugees and internally displaced persons — there is no substitute for it — and to produce the best results in the long run.

On the basis of these comments, I would like to ask Mr. Lubbers three questions.

The first concerns security in the refugee camps, to which he has referred. In Africa in particular, there are attacks on refugees, and a dynamic prevails in which refugees are mixed in with rebels or even with potential terrorists. I would like Mr. Lubbers to make some practical recommendations, in the light of the experience of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to help us draw a distinction on the ground and also to implement mechanisms of cooperation with local authorities to carry out practical measures that would enable us to distinguish a refugee from a rebel or terrorist.

My second question concerns the emphasis placed by the international community on the refugees' countries of origin or on the receiving countries. Our perception is that we tend to focus on the countries of origin — Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone — based somewhat on the fact

that those are the places of crisis. We tend not to focus much on the countries of destination — Guinea, Iran, Pakistan, Tanzania, Zambia. Recognizing that resources are scarce and that there is a proliferation of international causes that compete for those resources, what would be your practical recommendation, Mr. Lubbers, as to the approach we should take? Should we focus more on needs in the countries of origin or on those in the receiving countries? Naturally, one might claim that it would be better to do both, as a whole, and that sounds very good from a political perspective. In practice, however, it may not always be feasible.

My final question is this. In order to give us a clearer picture, might Mr. Lubbers perhaps educate us on the figures involved? How much does he estimate it to cost to return, rehabilitate and reintegrate a single refugee? The Council has at times been given certain figures, for instance, for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, but I do not have a very clear idea of the average cost of returning a refugee. I should like to know, more or less, whether there is a difference, for example, in such costs in Afghanistan as compared to Africa. It might also help the Council to respond if it were given some specific figures.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank the High Commissioner for Refugees for his briefing.

With respect to his opening remarks on the fight against terrorism, which he said must in no way compromise international protection of the right to asylum, I have nothing to add. I believe that we agree with them word for word. The international community must actively combat terrorism, in accordance with resolution 1373 (2001), but quite obviously that must in no way mitigate international protection of the rights of refugees.

Mr. Lubbers went on to refer to the situation in Afghanistan and in other parts of the world. Concerning the situation in Afghanistan, Mr. Lubbers was right to emphasize the prerequisites for the return of the many refugees now in Iran and Pakistan, one of which is clearly that of safety. There is another requirement, however, on which I know the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working assiduously: the conditions for return. Before they can return to Afghanistan, refugees must have a home, a job and a normal environment to return to, enabling them to live normally in their own country. I also know that UNHCR is negotiating tripartite agreements with Afghanistan and the host countries Iran and Pakistan precisely in order to plan the return of refugees in due course so that they can enjoy normal conditions in their country of origin.

I entirely agree with Mr. Lubbers' statement that we must, of course, pay close attention to the Afghan crisis, but there are many other crises, unfortunately, involving a great many refugees that we must not lose sight of. We must not fall victim to what is often called the "CNN effect". Unfortunately, there are other crises and, as Mr. Lubbers said, many other refugees, for example, in Africa.

What is of interest to us in the Security Council is to ensure that, when we adopt a peacekeeping mandate — as in the cases of Sierra Leone or the Democratic Republic of the Congo — we are able to take fully into account, to the extent allowed by available resources, the situation of refugees and displaced persons. Mr. Lubbers referred, for instance, to the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. That mandate provides for the assistance of the Blue Helmets, to the extent possible in their area of deployment, in the return of refugees and displaced persons. I believe that, when the Security Council adopts resolutions providing Blue Helmets to a peacekeeping operation, we must take systematically into account the problem of displaced persons and refugees.

As Mr. Lubbers pointed out, the very fact that we deploy observers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo creates an environment favourable to the return of displaced persons and refugees. Security Council action, however, is unfortunately not sufficient in itself to solve the problems of displaced persons and refugees. Assistance is needed. The UNHCR is providing it and donors should provide more of it, including in association with UNHCR. I would draw the Council's attention to a programme that France has established with UNHCR for the return to Sierra Leone of refugees now living in Guinea. We provide bilateral assistance and contribute to bilateral and multilateral assistance through UNHCR for the reintegration of Sierra Leonean refugees.

I have a question for Mr. Lubbers. Every year, the Economic and Social Council convenes a humanitarian

segment. I believe that it will be held this year in July in New York. Member States are currently considering the themes to be included on the agenda of the humanitarian segment this year. Can Mr. Lubbers give us his personal point of view, which might help delegations in their thinking? One theme, clearly, is the issue of access to vulnerable populations, but perhaps Mr. Lubbers might be more specific about what the Economic and Social Council can do at its humanitarian segment this July.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes in its turn to thank Mr. Lubbers for his very detailed and useful briefing. My delegation welcomes his presentation and thanks Mr. Lubbers for the regularity with which he remains in touch with our Council and of his briefings since his assumption of the leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He has done well, given that issues involving refugees arise in all phases of a crisis, including in the settlement of conflicts and even in post-conflict periods.

It is encouraging to note his ongoing interest in the fate of the many refugees in Africa. Regardless of the current increased focus on Afghanistan, as the representative of France pointed out earlier, we still feel that Africa remains a special case that must continue to enjoy focused attention. We can see that Mr. Lubbers is providing that attention and encourage him to continue to do so.

While there may be real hope today for Sierra Leone, we must nevertheless continue to stress the problems of Sierra Leonean refugees, notably the resumption of their repatriation with a view to enabling them to participate in the elections scheduled for May and thus to ensuring the broadest possible participation of the Sierra Leonean people in those consultations, which are of great importance to this Council. In that connection, I wonder what specific measures Mr. Lubbers is considering to encourage the remaining Sierra Leoneans living as refugees, inter alia, in Guinea to go home. What measures have been taken for their repatriation and reintegration within Sierra Leone?

I should like to stress that Guinea, a country that hosts refugees, welcomes Mr. Lubbers' initiative of Global Consultations on an agenda for protecting refugees. In our opinion, that initiative is now necessary in order to revitalize international legal instruments aimed at protecting refugees, notably the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the better to adjust them to the current international environment and thus to ensure protection for refugees and, as Mr. Lubbers quite rightly stressed, that refugees do not become a source of tension between States, particularly those of origin and those that receive them.

The 1951 Convention essentially rests on shared responsibilities. Regrettably, the host countries continue to bear the heaviest burden, a fact which continues to be a source of concern. Ambassador Franco addressed this issue at some length earlier, and we fully share his views in that respect.

Likewise, the situation of displaced persons remains a continuing source of concern. Every possible measure should be taken by the international community to restore and consolidate peace and security in countries that have just emerged from conflict and to adopt effective additional measures likely to promote national reconciliation and development.

Allow me to thank Mr. Lubbers once again. I wish to pay tribute to the humanitarian staff he heads for the dedicated and courageous work they are doing under what are often very dangerous and trying circumstances.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): Mr. President, may I, through you, join others in thanking Mr. Lubbers for his excellent and comprehensive briefing. It is very useful for the Security Council to be given such a good overview of his work in the areas in which we are engaged.

I should like just to ask two questions, through you, Mr. President, to Mr. Lubbers. The first concerns Afghanistan, and the second is a more generic question.

In Mr. Lubbers' presentation, he drew attention to the proposal by Mr. Brahimi that the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) should be extended more generally throughout Afghanistan. I should like to ask him if he could give us some indication of how that might, in his opinion, influence refugee flows within and from Afghanistan, and in particular how much the insecurity that currently prevails in the rural areas of Afghanistan represents a constraint on the return of refugees. That is my first question.

My second, more generic question relates to the recent restructuring of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which other speakers have referred to. I would like to ask Mr. Lubbers how great an effect that has had on his responses to recent crises, including the one in Afghanistan.

Mr. Lubbers: I wish to express my gratitude in general for the positive reactions. I will try to respond to some of the questions put forward.

I will respond to the last question first — a general one. Yes, it is true that, when I took office, I had to face the consequences of the fact that the budget, as decided by my governing body — the Executive Committee — was substantially higher than the funding. Therefore we had to face a gap of $125 million, or 13 per cent of the budget. I saw no other way to close that gap than to reduce the organization. That was a painful operation, both in terms of our advocacy role in countries and of the assistance aspect. We were a bit concerned that we really went to what one might call the rock bottom, the absolute minimum. That is where we are.

This means also that each additional challenge has to be met by additional funding. Here, Afghanistan is a prime example. Let me give the Council an impression of the numbers. The budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 2002 — its annual budget — is $828 million. The Afghanistan operation costs about $18 million a month. If we deduct some $5 million, which was already part of the annual budget in the whole region, we are speaking of about $13 million a month, which is about $170 million — roughly 20 percent over our funded budget. From that, it becomes clear, of course, that we can carry out the Afghanistan operation only with additional funding from countries. As the Council is aware, generous pledges were made earlier in a broad forum event in Geneva, and more recently, in a broader context, in Tokyo.

As for the budgetary consequences, let me turn to one of the questions posed by the representative of Colombia — the third question. It is not easy to define and calculate the cost of repatriation. That is related to the question: what is the role of UNHCR in that respect, and at what point do we hand over to other agencies and development actors?

Let us take the example of Afghanistan, which is an interesting example — it is not Africa, it is not Europe, it is a specific situation. Let me now relate this budget of $271 million for 15 months — $18 million a month — to the one and a quarter million whom we bring back in a year. That is all on paper, of course. We have to see what the exact numbers will be. But at least this gives the Council an indication of the shortage of money in terms of what is needed for the specific role of UNHCR.

Let me explain once again the specific role of UNHCR. Council members all can relate to Governments; maybe the easiest example is to say that refugees and internally displaced persons are people who do not have a government that takes care of them. But they have UNHCR. It functions, in effect, as a Minister for the Interior. It registers people, knows where they are, makes profiles of them and asks where they can go back to. This is our type of work.

Because there is no government taking care of these issues, when needed, we also provide protection and assistance, together with other bodies such as the World Food Programme. We are a coordinating force with other departments — other ministers — for those people without a government.

When we bring them back, in the beginning we go with them. We try to assist them with their initial needs — travelling and settling in. Sometimes we go somewhat further. Take the example of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where we helped people go back to their villages and assisted them in repairing their houses, in order to ensure their successful return. If they are farmers, we can go as far as providing the first seeds.

Of course, we try to do this in partnership with others and to hand things over, as soon as possible, to development agencies, through the interface of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction and rehabilitation. It is very difficult, therefore, to define a precise budget in terms of this type of durable solution.

There are, of course, other solutions. In the context of repatriation, there is also local integration in the first countries of asylum.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I spoke with President Mbeki and with Prime Minister Chrétien, whose country is a

member of the G-8, about the need to use this important new initiative also in connection with refugees in terms of return and local integration. In response to another question, we see that refugees are often a burden to the local population in host countries. We do hope that, as part of this new plan for Africa, new ways and means will be found to address needs in those regions where there are large refugee populations, not only to meet the needs of refugees but also to meet the needs of the local population so that there is less antagonism in the host countries and so that the populations of the host countries can see that, although they may have a lot of refugees, they are not only a burden but also represent prospects for development activities — for building roads, establishing hospitals and so forth. Such a change in paradigm — that is, that there is not only humanitarian assistance for refugees but also assistance for affected and burdened regions and host countries — is a very important change indeed towards striking the balance called for by the representative of Colombia. The representative of the United States also made comments about that challenge.

Let me now turn to the intriguing question of the French Ambassador, about setting the agenda for the humanitarian segment in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council. I think that this indeed presents an opportunity. As the Council is aware, the Economic and Social Council's work by definition complements the work of the Security Council, while at the same time being totally different from it. From the outset, there has been a Security Council and an Economic and Social Council. But I hope that I made it clear in my intervention this morning that they are not totally separate, especially when it comes to finding durable solutions. In that instance, organizations related to the Economic and Social Council are very important, as are the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council. To the extent that they are successful — in that connection I also mentioned the upcoming Monterrey Conference — they are an investment in security for the future.

To put it another way, if those investments in durable solutions are not made, we will again see desperate refugees turning to criminal networks and undergoing all sorts of problems to arrive in countries with mature economies. If we do not have solutions for protracted situations, then we will again see that refugees — especially young people in camps — will be vulnerable to the extent that they can be attracted by those who practise violence, including warlords and the like. In my opinion, there is therefore a connection between investing in security and the work of the Economic and Social Council. So I do hope that, perhaps during this year's humanitarian segment, there will be room and opportunity to debate and analyse this further. I must of course say to the representative of France that I am not in charge. I am just asking and pointing out that it might be important. But I hope that, with the assistance of the members there, it will be possible.

Another question pertained to security in the camps and the separation of armed elements and refugees. This is indeed a very important area. Allow me to say that we are making progress compared to a number of years ago. Practices have been developed to separate armed elements from refugees more thoroughly and fundamentally. We can see this in practice. If I were to take the members of the Council to the border between Angola and Zambia, they would be able to see people coming in and to observe how we work together with the officials of Zambia to separate the people. I mean literally separate, as armed persons are brought a long way to other camps where there are other armed elements and where they are totally separated from other refugees. Were I to take members of the Council to camps for Burundian refugees in Tanzania, they would see that there is quite an effort under way by the military and the internal police in those camps to curb the existence of arms in the camps and try to keep them out. This is of course our ideal: to have arms-free refugee camps. So there is progress. This involves the famous "ladder of options" that we use to try to improve the situation in the camps through separation.

Vulnerability in the camps is not limited solely to armed elements. When we speak about vulnerable women in refugee camps we are talking about other types of problems, as the Council may imagine. I just wanted to flag this for the Council as well. It is a very important element.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to respond to questions raised by members of the Council regarding the security of humanitarian staff themselves. This is a very important part of my responsibility and that of my colleagues. Almost every month, I either write letters to colleagues or receive letters from them due to there being a new victim. The numbers are

rising. This is a tragic situation that we are trying to improve by training staff to be aware of risks and by giving them necessary communication equipment, which helps a lot in improving the level of security. As the Council is aware, we also work with the United Nations Security Coordinator system.

But what is painful is that all these investments we must make represent financial resources, money that we ourselves must pay. I sometimes have to say to the poor refugees in camps that I am sorry there is so little for them, but that we have to pay for security. I sincerely doubt that the United Nations as a whole can afford not to pay for this out of the regular budget. I want to repeat that here once again. It is known that it can, but it is not done. It is a very strange situation, that the international community and the United Nations allow the existence of a situation in which the security of humanitarian staff is not considered part of their core responsibilities.

The representative of Guinea had kind words for me, and he was right in asking me how I am now carrying out the process of repatriation — in particular with regard to refugees in Guinea returning to Sierra Leone. We are going to try to do this in a way similar to what was done in Afghanistan. Now that the security situation is improving, we are moving towards a repatriation plan. I have spoken with my people. I have come under a certain amount of pressure to increase the number of returnees, also as a political signal. We are trying to do this. We know how important it is for the political process itself. But in this case as well, I am convinced that there must be sustainable returns of refugees. We must therefore assist refugees to reintegrate into their villages so that they can start once again to earn their own living. As the Council knows, most of them will do so in agriculture. We will do this, and maybe not too long from now we will come back to the Council with a more comprehensive plan to clarify what we are doing in Sierra Leone.

A number of other remarks were made, but I shall try to be selective in responding to them. One question I must certainly answer is that of the representative of the United Kingdom, about the security, or lack of security, in Afghanistan. I have no precise figures, but my people tell me that at the beginning it was very rewarding to see the intensity with which people spontaneously wanted to go home. They took a risk; they were heading, as it were, to a new Afghanistan with acceptable conditions. At this very moment, we see two clouds in the sky. One is that there have been a number of incidents where, even in the "new Afghanistan", people, especially Pashtuns, are now fleeing from certain regions where there is obviously a lack of tolerance and respect – a lack, if you like, of security. The second cloud, we fear, is that enthusiasm will wane if there is not sufficient security in the countryside. I am not in a position to make an estimate of what that means in numbers, but the signals should encourage us to look seriously at addressing this security problem. That, of course, is not my first responsibility, but I have to mention the point. I am fully aware of the dilemmas here: to what extent this has to be done by the international force, and to what extent the process towards an Afghan army and an Afghan security force can be speeded up. The only thing I can say is that, one way or another, there is a real need. Otherwise, the process will not develop in a good way.

I think it is fair that I should stop here, having answered a number of questions and not speaking too long.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lubbers for his most informative responses.

This is a valuable and useful meeting for the Council, which is why we all wish to participate. But I hope we can all be mindful of the hour, so that we can adjourn the meeting by 1 p.m.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, for his detailed briefing and for his replies to questions posed by members of the Council.

There is no need for me to speak of the importance of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the context of peacefully giving a new life to victims of war and conflict in many countries and regions. That is perfectly obvious. Today, the world community's attention is focused on hot spots where the most urgent tasks include the large-scale return of refugees and the provision of international assistance to internally displaced persons. Mr. Lubbers has detailed the steps being taken by UNHCR to address these problems from the Balkans to East Timor.

Let me first focus on the situation in Africa, where these problems are at their most serious. They

intensify the strong ethnic component of conflicts in Africa, first and foremost in the Great Lakes region. The mere presence on the territory of a neighbouring State of a large number of refugees of a given ethnic group — such as the case of Rwandan Hutus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — very often exacerbates regional tensions. Nor can we ignore the activities of armed groups whose members migrate along with the refugees; this makes it all the more difficult to protect the latter people.

Even though in its consideration of virtually all conflicts the Security Council unfailingly pays due attention to refugee problems and to support for the efforts of UNHCR and other international humanitarian organizations, the situation remains extremely tense. Millions continue to be cut off from their homelands, deprived of the basic necessities of survival. Russia sternly condemns the targeted forced migration of people in the course of a conflict, as was practised, for example, by UNITA in Angola. This cuts people off from the means of production — primarily from the land — and exacerbates the already difficult social and economic problems faced by the countries in question.

We are gravely concerned at the recent increased frequency of attacks and the use of force against international humanitarian personnel. Such crimes cannot be justified, and those guilty of them must be properly punished. Ensuring the safety of humanitarian personnel requires more than just the presence of the military contingents that the Security Council sends to protect them; it also requires strict adherence to the principle of impartiality in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance must not be used as an instrument to put political pressure on any party to a conflict. Otherwise, instead of being an effective tool for stabilizing a situation and supporting a process of political settlement, it could risk becoming a factor that foments conflict. That is what once took place in Somalia and in Rwanda.

Today, urgent humanitarian action is needed to solve the problem of refugees in and around Afghanistan; Mr. Lubbers spoke of this in detail, as did a number of members who have spoken before me. Unfortunately, the situation there remains extremely difficult. Tens of thousands of Afghans are going hungry; several areas of the country are nearing extinction, and diseases are raging.

Russia was among the first countries to lend a helping hand to the Afghan people. During the past two months, my country has delivered some 10,000 tonnes of humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan. A field hospital is in operation and is being presented to the Afghans free of charge. The Salang tunnel has been reopened to traffic. In Moscow, Russian organizations and other offices are now completing work on matters relating to the next phase of Russian assistance to Afghanistan, which will be more considerable and more varied. We call upon the parties from which the refugees originate and upon the countries that shelter them to create conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation. At the same time, in a number of cases, local integration or settlement in third countries would be among the options for the settlement of refugees who, because of prevailing conditions, are unable to return home.

We believe that the chief function of the Security Council is to create a political framework within which to prevent, defuse and, ultimately, resolve refugee problems. In practical terms, we need the cooperation of UNHCR, whose activities must be completely apolitical, humanitarian and social in nature.

In conclusion, I would like to focus on one important problem that has been raised during our discussion. Combating the threat of terrorism requires a comprehensive, multifaceted and long-term strategy on the part of the community of nations. Resolution 1373 (2001) calls upon States, before granting refugee status, to adopt appropriate measures with a view to determining whether individuals seeking asylum have planned, assisted in or committed terrorist acts. Clearly, the denial of asylum and protection to terrorists must be universal and applied without double standards. From that perspective, we believe that we should take a fresh look at the situation in refugee camps with a view to preventing their being converted into breeding grounds or a "natural resource" for terrorism.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. Like other delegations, we would like to thank Mr. Lubbers for his detailed briefing, in particular his overview of the situation in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Balkans, which will be very helpful for the Council in its discussions. His comments on the relationship between the issue of

refugees and the fight against terrorism deserve our attention.

The problem of refugees touches upon many issues and must be resolved through an integrated approach. The issues of which the Security Council is currently seized demonstrate that conflict and war are the major cause of refugees and internally displaced persons. While providing humanitarian assistance to refugees, therefore, the international community should concentrate on the resolution of disputes and the settlement of conflicts. The work that has been carried out by the United Nations in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and East Timor has produced results in this regard. We therefore believe that the Security Council should make further efforts in that direction.

The proper settlement of the question of refugees will require joint efforts on the part of the United Nations, relevant regional organizations and the parties to the conflict. The various bodies within the United Nations system should also be more efficient in their division of labour and cooperate better so that relief work for refugees can be carried out in a coordinated and orderly manner.

The problems associated with refugees vary from one part of the world to another. In resolving these problems, therefore, we must take into account the specific situations and needs of the countries and regions concerned. For some developing countries, poverty and economic underdevelopment are often among the major sources of armed conflict, while the lack of infrastructure, in turn, seriously hinders relief work for refugees. That has been the case in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. We therefore support Mr. Lubbers' comments to the effect that Africa should remain our top priority. We should build upon the work that has been done to date so as to truly help those countries to overcome their economic difficulties and properly address the return, resettlement and reintegration of refugees. If our work in this regard can yield speedy results, it will have an important impact on the peace and security of the countries and regions concerned.

Previous speakers have asked many of the questions that I was planning to ask, so I will not ask any of my own. I simply wanted to make those brief comments. Before concluding, however, I would like to say how much we appreciate the important contributions made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) over the years to the resolution of the problems of refugees throughout the world. The Chinese delegation will continue to support UNHCR in its work. We are convinced that, under the leadership of Mr. Lubbers, UNHCR will go on to even greater achievements.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to welcome the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, and to express its pleasure at seeing him here today. We are profoundly grateful for his comprehensive briefing and for his contribution to the cause of refugees — seeking solutions to the problems that they face and sensitizing the international community to their tragic situation and prompting it to make further efforts to address the increasing problems faced by refugees throughout the world.

Syria recognizes the fact that, over the past few years, an enormous burden has been placed on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a result of the mounting needs of refugees and internally displaced persons who have found themselves caught in the crossfire of conflict. We appreciate the efforts made by the High Commissioner to meet the needs of such refugees and internally displaced persons.

The question of refugees is prominent in areas of conflict all over the world. The resolution of the refugee problem is an important component of dispute-settlement processes. Furthermore, the influx of refugees and the arming of refugees are factors that contribute to instability in conflict regions. The return and repatriation of refugees are key factors for restoring durable peace and stability during the post-conflict stage.

We must not forget the root causes of conflict in many parts of the world. Many conflicts have their roots in the prevailing economic and social conditions, as well as in the consequences of colonialism or foreign occupation, as is the case in the Middle East region and in many countries, especially developing countries.

Although the problem of refugees in the Middle East does not fall within the jurisdiction of the UNHCR, it does fall within the mandate of the United Nations and the United Nations system as a whole. Therefore, we must bear in mind the fact that millions

of Palestinian refugees remain displaced, outside their homeland, after being expelled from their homeland by armed force in 1948. This has been a chronic humanitarian problem for the last 54 years.

More recently, displaced persons have been made refugees by Israel since 1967. These persons include half a million Syrian citizens. Contrary to logic and all legislation and relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948, these refugees continue to live without hope. In fact, they continue to face allegations and perverted logic that are not in accordance with international standards for dealing with the issue of refugees. For instance, Israel totally rejects the return of these refugees to the towns and villages of their homeland, under the pretext that they are not covered by the measures adopted by the Council and the United Nations in general to facilitate the return of all refugees to their homelands.

Some 1 million Palestinian refugees live in Jordan; approximately half a million are in Syria, and about the same number reside in Lebanon. Israel insists that these refugees have no right to return to their homeland, while it allows many others to return to States that are not their countries of origin and to places that are not their legitimate homes. What is important here is that these Palestinian refugees refuse to become residents or naturalized citizens of the countries where they live; their only hope and fervent desire is to return to the villages and towns of their homeland.

Syria agrees completely with all the points made by the High Commissioner and the remarks made by many other speakers here today. We are also deeply concerned over the refugee situation in Africa and believe that the African refugees, who continue to suffer the bitterness of displacement and poverty, must remain a top priority. In addition, we support the High Commissioner's remarks concerning the need to invest in areas to which refugees return.

While we express our thanks to the donor countries and our appreciation for their great efforts to ensure the return of refugees to their homelands, we note that the developing countries continue to bear the brunt of refugees on a global scale. We also call for the international protection of refugees so that their voluntary repatriation will be secured, while recognizing that voluntary repatriation under conditions of safety and dignity remains the best solution for refugees.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): I would also like to thank the High Commissioner for his informative statement and for the timely and highly relevant issues that he raised this morning.

It remains a fact that the victims of forced displacement, be they refugees or internally displaced persons, are an inherent symptom of conflicts and war as well as a source of new conflicts and antagonisms. It goes without saying, therefore, that the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) must be closely interlinked with all international efforts to prevent, mitigate and end wars and armed conflicts and arrive at durable solutions. How well these efforts succeed will determine the need and extent of UNHCR's involvement.

The international community has an obligation to safeguard the human rights of the victims of forced displacement. Norway has been among the active proponents of the need to pay special attention to the most vulnerable among the victims — children and women. We have come to realize that general measures often fall short, all the more so because the norms are so frequently determined from a male perspective. We commend UNHCR on the progress it has made towards gender mainstreaming.

All the national and regional situations that the High Commissioner mentioned in his statement this morning warrant a more thorough discussion than is possible on this occasion, in particular given our time constraints. I will therefore limit my remarks to two of the situations he mentioned.

For a number of years, Afghanistan has produced the highest number of refugees in the world. Even though the prospects for repatriation are better than they have been for years, we see how decisive the security situation will be for successful repatriation. In fact, as Chair of the Afghan Support Group, Norway is keenly aware that all humanitarian and reconstruction efforts of the international community will fall short if the security situation is allowed to deteriorate. We must underpin the political process and the authority of the Interim Administration in Kabul and do our utmost to provide a stable security environment for the enormous rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks ahead.

The return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons is a huge task for UNHCR. If we are to succeed, we must begin to regard refugees and internally displaced persons not only as victims but also as a resource and give them their legitimate voice in the running of their own lives. Empowerment of women is a special challenge. We place much trust in UNHCR's ability to do its part of the job and coordinate its efforts with those of all other relevant international actors.

A word on West Africa: with regard to Liberia, we are glad that the security situation appears to have improved in the areas where displaced Liberians and refugees from Sierra Leone last week fled the intensified fighting between rebels and Government forces. The fact that many of these Liberians have been displaced several times and that some were repatriated to Liberia only a few years ago, after having been forced to live abroad as refugees, illustrates fully the tragic human aspects of these issues. It also illustrates the importance of ensuring security for refugees after they have been helped to return home. I hope that UNHCR can now go ahead with the planned voluntary repatriation of refugees to Sierra Leone and that appropriate steps will be taken to prepare for their homecoming.

Finally, we welcome the High Commissioner's update on the situation in Eritrea and Ethiopia, which is particularly valuable in view of the forthcoming Security Council mission to these countries. We will keep his remarks in mind.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to thank High Commissioner Lubbers for his very comprehensive and detailed presentation this morning, and also to commend you, Sir, for the leadership and determination you have shown since assuming the presidency.

Since many of the points I would have raised have already been answered, I should like to ask just two or three general questions, if I may.

One, which Mr. Lubbers addressed at the beginning and conclusion of his remarks as well as in his first response, is related to his use of the word "paradigm" in terms of a new approach by the international community to refugees. In terms of the Global Consultations process, the meeting of ministers in Geneva in December and many issues that he has been emphasizing over recent months, he has referred to the need for the international community, building on the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, to look at new challenges of modernization, as I think he put it, on issues such as the protection of refugees within broader migration movements; burden-sharing, of course, which has become critical because many Governments, as he said, are reluctant to take so many refugees; and the integration of economic migrants, which can be a very difficult issue.

Does Mr. Lubbers see, in general terms, an operational set of conclusions emerging out of the process that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is now engaged in? This is, in many ways, an abstract question, but the conclusion to those issues, of course, will become deeply operational, depending on how the international community and the Council look at these issues in the future.

A second question I also wanted to ask concerns refugees not being allowed to languish in camps, often for decades. The High Commissioner made the point on the repatriation of Eritrean refugees from the Sudan, where, I think, a figure of 36,000 was mentioned. He rightly stressed that many of those people have been in camps since the 1960s and the 1970s. Is there a particular new approach that can be taken? The same, obviously, would become true of Afghanistan, potentially; millions of people, even before 11 September, have been in camps in Iran and Pakistan. What approach, including in the context of the discussions with the African Union on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, could be taken to address the question of long-term refugees, since often — particularly in many African countries — that has been a problem that the international community has tended to ignore and that often, in turn, becomes a very destabilizing factor, sometimes years or decades afterwards, in terms of conflict prevention?

The last question I did want to ask, picking up on the remarks of the High Commissioner, refers to the Great Lakes region. We had the opportunity to hear President Buyoya earlier this week. In terms of the numbers of internally displaced persons or refugees who, once there is a ceasefire, may potentially be returning in much larger numbers to Burundi, there has been some speculation that there have been discussions on safe havens as an interim measure or, given the numbers involved, that a more structured approach will be adopted. I noticed, of course, that Mr. Lubbers used

the word "voluntary" in his statement. Does he see the particular challenge in the Great Lakes region and in Burundi as one of the more complex over the coming period? Since, hopefully, there will be a ceasefire before too long, how rapid a movement of returnees does he envisage, given the 600,000, I think, in Tanzania alone?

These are very general questions, but, to conclude, I would also like to express appreciation for the detail with which he has gone into these issues. We appreciate very much the work he is doing.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): We welcome, as others have, the High Commissioner back to the Council and thank him for his very comprehensive briefing. His presentation is a timely reminder of the links between the issue of refugees and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The targeting of refugees and internally displaced persons has also long been used as a military objective and political tool. In fact, as mass human displacements are inherently destabilizing, such exoduses can, as Mr. Lubbers has said, create tensions between States and undermine international peace and security.

We also thank the High Commissioner for reminding us that Africa must remain a top priority. Of course, as the Chair of the Liberian sanctions Committee, we have taken careful note of his comments on the situation in the Mano River Union. We have also taken note of his comments on the situation in East Timor. While the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) cannot, of course, remain in East Timor indefinitely, we trust that its exit plans pay careful attention to and take into account the current situation on the ground.

When addressing refugee flows, there is increasingly a need to take into account the regional context. The cross-border nature of many existing conflicts means that human displacements — and, indeed, the push factors — are not limited by national boundaries. It is with this in mind that we welcome the encouraging steps taken towards a more comprehensive and holistic approach in addressing conflicts and the resultant human displacements, for instance, in West Africa and the Great Lakes region.

On its part, the Security Council has a special, although not exclusive, responsibility in tackling the root causes of conflict and also in helping to create the conditions to support the return of displaced persons. Here, it may be pertinent to recall the words of former High Commissioner Mrs. Sadako Ogata to the Council more than two years ago. She observed that:

> "humanitarian action alone will not be able to solve any of the problems leading to forced human displacement; it cannot substitute for Governments and the Security Council in areas for which they have a clear responsibility, such as peacekeeping and peace-building. The Council has an essential role to play in preventing, containing and resolving conflicts — and, hence, refugee problems." (*S/PV.4089*, p. 6)

Mrs. Ogata then went on to enumerate the ways in which the Council could achieve this, which I will not repeat, but, as the High Commissioner's own presentation makes clear, these common-sense points enumerated by Mrs. Ogata are still relevant today and we should bear them in mind as we go about our work in the Council.

We also wish to emphasize once again the critical importance of assistance to host countries, many of which are in the developing world and facing their own economic challenges. Hosting large refugee populations poses unique pressures and creates an enormous strain on host countries. This was recognized by our leaders in part VI of the Millennium Declaration, under the heading "Protecting the vulnerable", which pledged

> "to strengthen international cooperation, including burden sharing in, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to, countries hosting refugees". (*resolution 55/2*, para. 26)

Unfortunately, we have yet to identify in concrete terms how best to collectively tackle the problem in a long-term and durable manner.

Managing the dilemma of the global refugee crisis requires a concerted international effort that lies beyond the scope of today's debate, but we must, at the very least, consider how the other parts of the United Nations system, including the Security Council, can better assist and complement the work of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies in providing refugee relief. We welcome Mr. Lubbers' view on this.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Lubbers and his team for their excellent

and tireless work, often under the most trying circumstances. We feel that it is unacceptable that there should be deliberate targeting by armed elements of humanitarian and relief personnel. There is a need for a robust international framework for the better protection of United Nations humanitarian personnel, building on the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. If the High Commissioner has any thoughts on this, we hope that he will share them with us, if not today, then whenever possible.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Lubbers, to respond to the questions that have been asked.

Mr. Lubbers: Let me express my thanks for the very rich contributions in terms of comments and questions.

Allow me to begin by responding to the first remark of the representative of China. He said, quite correctly, that we have been successful in a number of situations, which he mentioned. This is an invitation to the Security Council to broaden its efforts to include other regions where sufficient success has not yet been achieved, and I would underline this. This also relates to a remark made by the representative of Singapore in which she quoted a statement made two years ago by Mrs. Ogata, who elaborated on the key responsibility of the Security Council to build and to keep peace as essential to reducing the number of new refugees. In fact, working for peace creates part of the solution: people can then go home.

I strongly agree also with the statement made by several representatives that assistance to host countries is a very important element. It has become very clear in the context of global consultations that, while the international community fully accepts, and wants to continue with, the commitment not to push out but to find solutions for refugees, this principled attitude can be put into practice only when there is fair burden-sharing. But fair burden-sharing is achieved through different corridors. One of them is, indeed, support for the host countries, and I will repeat what I said in the first response: assistance must be given not only to refugees in the host countries, but also to the areas in which large refugee populations are located. We have to relate better to the host communities there.

I want to stress once again in particular — and I think that this point was made also by the representative of Ireland — the link with the African partnership initiative, and, more generally, I would say, with development assistance. It is absolutely wrong thinking to see refugees and internally displaced persons in terms of humanitarian assistance only. It is very important, if one wants to find solutions, to see them first as people — men, women, families — who want once again to play a role in society, to become productive again, to participate in society. Therefore we badly need the resources and the partnerships necessary to go one step further than humanitarian assistance only. Indeed, I think that a new paradigm should be developed in the search for solutions.

There is something strange here. If one studies the history of the High Commissioner for Refugees, one can see that it all started in 1951 with the ambition to take care of people who do not have governments to take care of them. Shortly thereafter, the international community — the United Nations — came to the conclusion that an essential element of that mission should be the achievement of durable solutions. But that element of the mission was never really made operational — except occasionally — and it is still quite weak.

I think that the time has come to take this step forward. That is indeed the way to end protected situations. In this context, the Council sometimes plays a key role in bringing about security and in creating conditions that allow people to go home; that is true. But often it starts earlier; in fact, from the very beginning one has to think in terms of solutions — fostering self-reliance and empowerment and providing education. This is necessary in any case, be it for repatriation, local integration or even for a resettlement solution.

I was asked to say a few words, but I have to be brief because we have a time limit. Some things have become clear from these global consultations. I will mention two examples, still not concluded. It has become clear to us that, in new situations, we have to think more systematically about comprehensive plans to deal with massive outflows of people. This is not totally new. It was done with the Kosovars, it was done with the Vietnamese boat people, and there are other examples.

Maybe we have to conclude that, in any situation where within a year, let us say, a substantial number of people flow out of a country, we should bring countries

together at an international conference and call upon them to devise a comprehensive plan to share the burden. In this way maybe they can share that burden temporarily and not say, "There is a problem there and we are staying out", but see it as the international community's problem. This is one important element.

Let me turn to the second element. We have an agenda for development, in particular with Africa; we can use instruments and financial resources to end a number of protected situations and to create possibilities for repatriation. I agree with the representative of the Russian Federation that UNHCR should be an apolitical organization; we are a humanitarian body. But it is, in fact, very humanitarian to say to the African leaders and to the rich countries that, if they embark on new initiatives and partnerships, they should reserve resources and create conditions conducive to resolving a number of these problems. I am saying this in the interest of the people on whose behalf I speak, who deserve it.

To be frank, I say this also in relation to the international community and to the Security Council itself, because, as several representatives have noted, not to provide solutions to refugees is, in fact, to take risks with the future. The problems come back time and again, and therefore we have to go beyond thinking, "Fine, we have a yearly report from the High Commissioner, and so it is business as usual". This is absolutely unacceptable.

The 20 million people with whom I am concerned represent only a limited number in terms of the population of this earth, but, believe me, the challenge is much greater. They are the outcome of tragic deficiencies in our political systems, and they could be the cause of new problems. If we complain about the increase in human trafficking and about increasing crime, then it is good to be aware that those phenomena have root causes, and that one of them is the fact that we simply do not deliver in terms of solidarity and new opportunities for those people who are victims of a first round of violence and persecution.

I think it would be better for me to come to a close. There is so much more to say, but I have been asked to be brief. I shall use my very last minute to introduce my new representative here. He was a special envoy of the previous High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Ogata, and then for me in the Balkans. I have now asked him to come to New York because I am aware that there are ongoing developments and situations, as well as many questions that deserve more detailed answers. My man here, Eric Morris, who is known to the Council, is available to all members of the Council.

Finally, I want to thank the President for giving me the opportunity to be here, in the midst of the Council, to make it clear that the Security Council is absolutely essential to my work. If there is improvement, it is thanks to the Security Council and its initiatives. If there are protracted situations, I think the Council deserves to have the other parts of the United Nations family and system, all the countries and the Economic of Social Council — to which I referred in my answer to the representative of France — focused on ending those situations. Only when we prioritize durable solutions for refugees will there be peace and security. Without that, one can forget other things. One can have nice development and assistance plans, as well as speeches, but they are not going to work. We must see this in a very practical way.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lubbers for his comments and for the responses he has given to the questions asked of him.

Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon): I would like, through you, Mr. President, to thank Mr. Lubbers for his lucid and illuminating presentation. I thank him in particular, as previous speakers have, for the fact that, despite what some delegations mentioned about the "CNN effect", he still managed to maintain the focus on Africa. It is true that, as an African, I would have been pleased and happy to do without this dubious distinction, but we have to deal with the fact that the focus is on Africa.

In that connection, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Lubbers for his mention of the importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is an African-conceived and African-led initiative that, as all members of the Council know, is aimed at working for peace, political stability, economic prosperity and sustainable development in Africa — which, in fact, is one of the main and surest ways of stemming the tide of the refugee problem. I thank him very much for that, and we take note of his call on African leaders to try to factor in the refugee component in the implementation of NEPAD. That message is well understood, particularly in terms of my country, which happens to

be one of the 14 countries called upon to steer the implementation of the initiative.

While waiting for NEPAD to have its effect in the long term, something has to be done in the interim. It is in this vein that we would like to sympathize with, and share in, his call for more resources for the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). That call is very important because, as Mr. Lubbers mentioned, when he took office he found out that there was a major financial gap. As is said in Latin, *nemo dat quod non habet* — you cannot give what you do not have.

We understand the difficulties because, in the process of his reform to accommodate to the limited resources, some offices have had to be closed or redeployed. One of those happened to be the one in Cameroon. In this connection, I would like to ask him — and I know this was done just a short time ago — whether he has had the time to evaluate what the effects of that closure and redeployment are. That is the first issue.

The second issue concerns his determination to work against the abuse of the asylum system. I think this is a very important element because, as he mentioned, we are dealing here with a very vulnerable group that, more often than not, are considered as being scapegoated. We heard of wire reports of some cases in the southern parts of Africa in which the system had been abused by some UNHCR workers to serve as a conduit for immigration to some northern countries. First of all, I would like Mr. Lubbers to confirm whether this is true at all; and, if so, to say what actions are being taken by his Office to address the situation, which, in a way, detracts from the very important work being done by the devoted workers of UNHCR.

Thirdly, my last question has to do with Afghanistan. Yesterday we heard the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan mention the fact that the United Nations is now working towards an integrated approach to United Nations intervention in Afghanistan. Experience in other areas has shown that, more often than not, the full impact of international intervention in crisis situations is diminished by lack of coordination and, sometimes, by turf wars. I would just like, if time permits, for Mr. Lubbers to shed light on how UNHCR intends to fit into that effort, and if he foresees any problems in which the Council can help with some guidance.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): Given the lateness of the hour, I shall try to be as brief as possible.

First of all, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on the problem of refugees, which is an important issue. The briefing just delivered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is extremely interesting and useful to us.

I would simply like to speak a bit about the situation in the western Balkans, to which Mr. Lubbers quite rightly referred. We share his analysis. I would just like to draw the attention of the Council and that of Mr. Lubbers to the highly delicate situation that still prevails in Macedonia. We agree with him that there is a major risk of new problems triggering refugee flows. We must not forget that this small country recently experienced an unprecedented inflow of refugees, a number that represents a very significant percentage of its own population. To some extent, the presence of those refugees during the Kosovo crisis has jeopardized the very existence of Macedonia. We must never forget that. I therefore thank Mr. Lubbers for having addressed this very important problem that may potentially become serious.

Mr. Lubbers was quite right to speak of a certain donor fatigue with respect to the problem of refugees in the western Balkans. True enough, there has been some impressive success, but at the same time the reintegration of refugees into their respective national communities remains a major problem. That is where we run into the very important issue that Mr. Lubbers mentioned a moment ago: immediate humanitarian efforts, and development efforts. We thank Mr. Lubbers for taking that nuanced and accurate approach, and for showing that refugees often constitute a development opportunity both for the country of refuge and for the country of origin. That is worth emphasizing.

Mr. Gokool (Mauritius): In view of time constraints, and in response to the appeal of the President, I shall limit my intervention to just a few observations. First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's public meeting on the subject of refugees, which is of direct relevance to the work of the Security Council. Members of the Council will agree that hardly any report of the

Secretary-General discussed in the Security Council fails to address the issue of refugees.

I wish also to join other delegations in extending a warm welcome to Mr. Ruud Lubbers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and in thanking him for his comprehensive briefing. We commend the High Commissioner for his sustained efforts in addressing refugee problems. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the invaluable work of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which helps more than 21 million refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide.

Let me begin my observations by saying that it is important that refugees and internally displaced persons not be denied basic human rights and human dignity. That can be possible only if humanitarian agencies and local non-governmental organizations work together with a view to preventing abuses, especially to children, women and vulnerable groups, in the countries concerned.

Secondly, advancing human security, especially for refugees and returnees, should not be the responsibility solely of UNHCR or the humanitarian agencies. There should be greater awareness among world leaders about addressing the conditions of refugees. In that regard, I think it is pertinent to reiterate that there is a need for practical burden-sharing, as the High Commissioner rightly pointed out in his statement this morning. We were happy to learn that at their December ministerial meeting, the States parties to the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees adopted a declaration. We hope that the declaration will be put into effect and will result in better protection for refugees and returnees.

My delegation believes that there should be a comprehensive international and regional approach that would ensure a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to a development strategy. It is well known that the absence of integrated peace-building strategies, particularly in refugee situations, often diminishes the chances for achieving a sustainable peace. It is therefore time to bridge the gap that exists between the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance during conflicts and the beginning of long-term development programmes in post-conflict situations.

Finally, my delegation would like to ask the High Commissioner for Refugees a question in respect of Afghanistan. Bearing in mind that major refugee problems exist in Afghanistan, what kind of coordination with other United Nations agencies is being envisaged to ensure not only a safe return but a safe stay for the refugees? It is undeniable that safety and security should be provided on all fronts, or else all efforts to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable groups may come to naught.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a few comments and pose a few questions in my capacity as the representative of Mexico.

I thank Mr. Lubbers for his substantial presentation and for participating in today's meeting, which was invaluable for the Security Council. I thank him too for having mentioned Mexico's experience with Guatemalan and other Central American refugees. He was right to note that there may be something in that experience that could be applied in the search for solutions to refugee problems in other regions. Here, I would focus on two elements: the successful use of voluntary repatriation, principally for Guatemalan refugees returning home from Mexico; and, as noted by Mr. Lubbers, the willingness of the Mexican Government to naturalize and normalize the status of certain refugees who were born in our country. That is being extended also to some members of the families of refugees born in Mexico.

Let me also underline something else that has already been mentioned: that, by establishing the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations shouldered an eminently humanitarian responsibility that is part of the complex political picture that gives rise to the refugee problem. That is why it is of the utmost importance to my country that the humanitarian nature of the work of UNHCR be preserved, notwithstanding the demands of the fight against terrorism. It is our hope that the fight against terrorism will not aversely affect the ability of the United Nations to keep providing support, assistance and protection to refugees.

Mr. Lubbers has rightly said that the United Nations and UNHCR play a coordinating role and must work with a broad range of other international, multilateral and national bodies. He spoke also of the interface that is necessary to ensure that not only the UNHCR but all those other institutions as well are involved at every phase of the process. That process ranges from immediate humanitarian assistance to

refugees when a problem first arises to protecting them, providing security and seeing to their return and their rehabilitation. We are certain that Mr. Lubbers would agree that it is necessary also to prevent situations that could lead to refugee problems. It is our view that this is a central international security issue, and that it therefore requires a strategic partnership among all relevant institutions. As Mr. Lubbers has said, we must seek lasting solutions because only these can provide a foundation for peace.

We also believe that the central problems of development must be tackled, since these are at the root of many of the factors that in turn give rise to displacement, migration and refugee problems; we consider that this is the spirit guiding the preparations for the Monterrey, Mexico, International Conference on Financing for Development and that will guide its deliberations.

I should therefore like to put the following question to Mr. Lubbers: in the light of his experience at UNHCR, what does he consider the prospects to be for this strategic association, this partnership, involving not only the Security Council but all the agencies of the United Nations system? On that basis, could we also create a leadership phenomenon at the institutional level, which will bring in the support of other countries?

We are certain that the central problem with which Mr. Lubbers will have to come to grips over the coming months and years will be how to make resources available to deal with that gigantic phenomenon that currently involves more than 21 million people. How can we channel those resources across the board, not just to provide immediate assistance to refugees but to deal with the phenomenon in its entirety? I put that question to Mr. Lubbers on the understanding that time may not allow him to respond fully here and now. However, it would prove very useful — for Mexico and for the entire Council — if he were able to submit a note to us reflecting his thoughts on the partnership and the strategic association that needs to be created to come to grips with the problem of refugees, across the board, in a lasting and stable way, as part and parcel of efforts to maintain international peace and security.

I conclude by once again thanking Mr. Lubbers for having joined us at this Security Council meeting and expressing the hope that he will soon do so again.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I should now like to call on Mr. Lubbers to respond to the comments made and questions posed.

Mr. Lubbers: In the last round of statements, the representative of Cameroon brought up three points, the first relating to what I would call the rather tragic decision that we had to take in relation to the office in Cameroon. I promised his compatriots that we would take a fresh look at that, because it was based very much on an absolute shortage of funds. I have promised to look into the situation.

Secondly, I confirm, indeed — we spoke earlier about this — that very serious, even criminal, acts took place in Nairobi related to resettlement. We went to the judiciary and the overseers, as well as the competent authorities in Kenya. Beyond that, of course, we have our own responsibilities to take the measures needed and to improve the system.

The third question asked by the representative of Cameroon related to Afghanistan. His point was also put forward by others — for example by the representative of Mauritius. I will try to be brief in explaining what developed. As soon as the situation in Afghanistan changed to the extent that one could begin managed remigration, we made ourselves available to do that job, because our mandate is not only to provide protection and assistance to refugees, but to find solutions for them. That is the first point.

Before we started to do that, we had been asked by the United Nations system — via the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — to take care of internally displaced persons in the eastern part of Afghanistan. This was a relatively new flow of internally displaced persons resulting from the air attacks on cities in the eastern part of Afghanistan. People had to flee, but the borders were closed, so they went to the countryside and hills, and we were asked to go there. We were able to do so because, since we were preparing ourselves for a larger outflow, we had available the logistics and the material requirements. So that was the first phase.

The next step related to what to do with the internally displaced persons who wanted to go home. We came to the conclusion that in terms of repatriation, it had to be a seamless operation. In the villages to which the people were going — which we had to

prepare for people to return — we could not make a distinction based on whether someone was a refugee from outside the country or an internally displaced person. So we did that together. I came to the point of view, of course, that, in situations of partnership, if the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had a capacity and used it for internally displaced persons in the western part of the country, while the Red Cross was being very positive in assisting internally displaced persons in, for example, the northern part of the country, it would be rather stupid if we did not make use of those capacities. So our plan for repatriation is to work together with them, while continuing to give assistance to refugees remaining in the surrounding countries and to internally displaced persons who have still not returned home.

So it is a partnership operation. Perhaps the simplest way to describe our role is to use the term "lead agency". We cannot do it ourselves, though; we have to do it in partnership. By the way, what I said makes it clear: this is not only partnership within the United Nations system; it is also partnership beyond the United Nations system. I mentioned IOM; I mentioned the Red Cross. I could mention relevant non-governmental organizations as well. But it is, of course, very important for the new Interim Administration in Kabul that there be one address. So we sit there at the table and invite the others, and we share our insights and compare notes and numbers on what has to be done. We profile the people and determine what sort of capacities they have, and discuss what it means to bring people back.

That is the way we approach it. And — in response to one of the other questions — as far as I can see, there are no problems with that. The system still has to be formalized. The Council will hear about that, of course, from the Secretary-General and Lakhdar Brahimi — whose deputy, Mr. Fisher, has been chosen. I have full trust in him. He will look into the cooperation that is also needed with development agencies, so that when we have, as it were, done our job, we can hand it over with trust and confidence. So he is responsible. We speak to him about not only our efforts, undertaken together with others, in the process of assisting returnees but, later on, development and reconstruction efforts, as put on the table first in Tokyo. As the Council knows, the Interim Administration itself said, "It's fine; it's nice. But please, we are now the Interim Administration. Give us time to have a look ourselves". So our people discipline themselves to go to the Minister. I think that that is good. It is still an interim Administration, but we consider it to be in charge of governance for the Afghans today.

So those are a few elements of the inclusive way in which we approach this matter — in partnership with others. It is very clear, too, that there has to be one address with which the Minister for Repatriation can link up. We do this in the United Nations under the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi, with his deputy for this segment, Mr. Fisher, who is dealing with returnees and reconstruction. That is the additional information on Afghanistan.

The representative of Bulgaria reflected once again on Macedonia. I am a bit jealous: my instructions have always been to speak of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", but he can allow himself to speak about "Macedonia". However, we are speaking of the same people.

We are very aware that the very generous Macedonians received an enormous influx of Albanians from Kosovo when the Albanians were in danger. These refugees have now returned to Kosovo. We now ask our Albanian friends to behave in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and to give the Macedonians who were obliged to flee a number of villages every opportunity to return. This forms part of our confidence-building strategy. At the same time, we find it gratifying that the Government and political parties of Macedonia have agreed to a system in which there are also full rights for Albanians, some of whom are already citizens or will soon obtain citizenship. That is a different story, but it is important that this coexistence be strengthened further, and we at UNHCR are there to do a job of confidence-building. I am positive that this is going to be a success.

The representative of Mauritius pointed out the need for an integrated approach and asked me about Afghanistan. I have already answered the latter question.

I now turn to you, Mr. President, in your capacity as representative of Mexico. You very capably echoed the main points of your colleagues here, and I am prepared to answer you more thoroughly in a note concerning what is needed in order to go forward in our strategy.

I should like to thank you, Sir, in your capacities as representative of Mexico and President of the Council, and all of your colleagues here as well. I am aware that I took too much of the Council's time, but I think the 21 million people who are my concern deserve it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, for his participation in this meeting. This has been time very well spent. It could have been extended so that we could continue hearing the explanations and perspectives of the High Commissioner concerning the problem of refugees. I also thank him for his gracious words addressed to me and to my country.

No other member of the Security Council has asked for the floor.

Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to announce that it is my understanding that the members of the Council have reached agreement on a presidential statement on the situation in Burundi. Accordingly, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, I shall convene another meeting of the Council to adopt that statement.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4471

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4471st meeting

Thursday, 7 February 2002, 1.25 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Ms. Arabadjieva
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Liu Hai Xin
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Guinea	Mr. Zoumanigui
	Ireland	Mr. Clare
	Mauritius	Mr. Jingree
	Norway	Mr. Brattskar
	Russian Federation	Mr. Tarabrin
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kelly
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

The situation in Burundi.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-24562 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President *(spoke in Spanish):* The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

As a result of consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council pays tribute to the signatories to the Arusha Agreement, and the transitional President His Excellency Mr. Pierre Buyoya in particular, for their efforts to advance the peace process. It expresses its full support for the transitional Government set up on the basis of the Agreement, which was represented by President Buyoya at the meetings of the Council on 5 February 2002. The Council reiterates its gratitude for the facilitation efforts of the former President Mandela. It also expresses its support for the ongoing efforts of President Bongo and Deputy President Zuma, as well as States in the region and South Africa to facilitate the implementation of the Arusha Agreement.

"The Security Council reaffirms that continued fighting against the legitimate transitional Government set up pursuant to an inclusive peace agreement is totally unjustifiable and unacceptable and threatens the implementation of the peace process. It once more calls on the rebel groups immediately to lay down arms, in the interest of all Burundians, and recalls that only a negotiated solution will finally end the fighting. In this connection, the Council commends the commitment of the transitional Government to enter into ceasefire negotiations and pays tribute to the efforts made to that end by the facilitation team and, in coordination with the latter, by the States in the region, particularly the United Republic of Tanzania. The Council emphasizes that it is now up to the rebel groups to do their part. It calls on them immediately to translate into action the encouraging signals that they have given recently. It emphasizes further that, while the transition is moving ahead according to the established time frame, time is of the essence for the rebels finally to join the peace process.

"The Security Council welcomes the steps taken by the Governments of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to normalize their relations. In this regard, it also welcomes the joint communiqué they issued on 7 January 2002 (S/2002/36). It calls on them to implement as soon as possible the elements agreed in this communiqué, and in particular to ensure that the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will not be used for armed attacks against Burundi, and to proceed to the effective withdrawal of Burundian troops from Congolese territory.

"The Security Council emphasizes that national reconstruction and economic recovery are the other main challenges which the Burundi peace process must overcome in order to place itself on a stronger footing. The Council stresses the important role of the international community in this regard and calls on donor countries to honour as soon as possible the pledges which they made at the Paris (December 2000) and Geneva (December 2001) donor round tables, as well as on the United Nations system as a whole to support the transitional Government for the reconstruction of the country."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/3.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4472

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4472nd meeting

Wednesday, 13 February 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Angola.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-25076 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Angola and Portugal, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chikoti (Angola), took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for External relations of Angola.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal) took a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Oshima to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. After the briefing, I shall give the floor to the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, Mr. Georges Chikoti, who will make a presentation. Thereafter, I will open the floor to Council members who wish to comment or ask questions.

I now give the floor to Mr. Oshima.

Mr. Oshima: I wish to thank the Security Council for providing me with this opportunity and in particular to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene a meeting on the humanitarian situation in Angola.

While the world's attention has been focused on the situation in Afghanistan, other emergencies, such as the protracted one in Angola, are badly in need of our attention. Under-Secretary-General Gambari, as the Council will recall, touched upon the disheartening humanitarian conditions in Angola in December, when he briefed the Council following his mission there. Sadly, not much has changed since then. Today I hope to give the Council a full account of the humanitarian situation, and I am also pleased to inform the Council that the Humanitarian Coordinator for Angola, Mr. Erick de Mul, is also present and is available to answer questions.

First, let me begin with an update on the humanitarian conditions in Angola, which remain among the worst in the world. The statistics for the country are truly shocking. Angola ranks one hundred and forty-sixth in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) human development index, out of 162 countries. Life expectancy is 44 years, and 63 per cent of all households live below the poverty line.

The status of children is catastrophic. Thirty per cent of all children die before reaching the age of 5. An estimated 100,000 children have been separated from their families, and evidence indicates that child soldiers are once again being forced to fight in the country's ruinous civil war. In addition, new cases of polio have been confirmed in eastern Angola.

The Angolan war has also created one of the largest displaced populations in the world. Since 1999, the total number of displaced persons has doubled, from 2 million to over 4 million now. This means that almost one third of the country's entire population of 12 million is displaced.

Despite being weakened by the sanctions imposed by the Council, UNITA continues to destabilize large parts of the countryside and to disrupt normal economic and social activities in all areas, except Luanda and certain coastal and western zones. Over the last two years, UNITA has shifted to guerrilla warfare, with random attacks on the civilian population and key infrastructure.

The primary victims are civilians, who increasingly are finding themselves caught up in the middle of UNITA attacks and the Government's counter-insurgency strategy. The net result has been a rapid increase in displacement and human deprivation.

The map now on the screen shows the areas of the country where displaced populations are concentrated. Insecurity and military action have forced populations to flee from rural areas into mainly provincial capitals. As the map indicates, all of Angola's 18 provinces have internally displaced persons.

In a worrisome trend, the past six months have seen an increase in the number of security incidents affecting humanitarian personnel and assets. Since July, more than 40 separate incidents involving harassment by security forces or looting of humanitarian assets have occurred.

Almost all humanitarian agencies in the country are working at full capacity. In some locations, agencies are overwhelmed by the emergency needs of the internally displaced persons, with neither the means nor the personnel to meet them. In Kuito and Camacupa, more than 62,000 displaced persons have poured into the area during the last five months. An additional 12,000 entered during the first two weeks of January alone. There is almost no space to accommodate these people, and resources have run out.

Despite the difficult situation, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been striving to meet the humanitarian needs of displaced and other vulnerable people. The humanitarian operation in Angola is one of the largest in the world; it includes more than 400 national and international non-governmental organizations. Approximately 1 million Angolans receive food aid. An even larger number receive health care and benefits from programmes in the areas of water and sanitation, nutritional support, education and mine action. Despite the magnitude of this assistance, only a fraction of the overall needs of the country are being met.

As the map on the screen indicates, humanitarian agencies operate in about 60 per cent of the 272 locations where internally displaced persons are concentrated.

Humanitarian coverage is limited by a number of factors, including insecurity, mine infestation, poor infrastructure, lack of capacity and lack of funding. The map now on the screen shows the areas where international agencies have unrestricted access. As members can clearly see, most of the country's interior is too insecure for agencies to launch operations.

Amid all these problems and difficulties, it is heartening to note that the Government of Angola has taken several positive steps in recent years to increase its involvement in the provision of humanitarian assistance, and this must be noted. For example, the Government has allocated more than $50 million to the national emergency programme and has created a Fund for Peace and Reconciliation during the past two years. Working closely with the United Nations, Angolan authorities have helped close more than 35 transit centres where people were living in inhumane conditions.

I am also pleased to note that Angola is the leading country in incorporating the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement developed by Mr. Francis Deng, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, into its national legal framework. These Guiding Principles became an important basis for establishing minimum standards for the resettlement of internally displaced persons, developed by the Government in cooperation with United Nations agencies.

Another positive development in the Angola operation is the increasing cooperation between the Government of Angola and the humanitarian community. A protection strategy for internally displaced persons was recently developed and is being implemented in partnership with the Government. This has resulted in a number of important achievements, including joint monitoring of violations by the Government and the United Nations. In addition to this, the 2002 United Nations Consolidated Appeal for assistance was developed, for the first time, jointly by the Government and the humanitarian community. It includes an innovative rights-based humanitarian strategy that is based on core principles in the Angolan Constitution. The Government has shown its

commitment to this strategy by setting out 40 "point partnership targets" that it intends to meet this year.

While these positive achievements by the Government should be acknowledged, it is clear that much more needs to be done, and quickly, for that matter. This must also be noted and emphasized. For example, one of the major constraints to delivering humanitarian aid is the appalling state of the country's infrastructure. Four of the airstrips used by humanitarian agencies are currently under repair, limiting the number of humanitarian flights, and in some cases putting humanitarian personnel at risk. Repairs on the Kuito airstrip, located in one of the hardest-hit areas in the country, have been delayed for more than 22 months. Damaged bridges also severely limit the use of surface routes. The combination of widespread insecurity and damaged infrastructure forces the World Food Programme, which manages the logistics network in the country, to deliver up to 60 per cent of all humanitarian assistance by air. This is one of the reasons why the Angolan humanitarian operation is one of the most expensive in the world, after Afghanistan.

In addition to urgently repairing infrastructure such as the Kuito airstrip, there are a number of steps that the Government must take to assume greater responsibility for helping to alleviate the suffering of its own people. These include securing surface routes, which would lower the cost of delivering humanitarian assistance; establishing days of tranquillity in order to allow access for polio and other immunization and for the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance; implementing partnership targets agreed to in the 2002 consolidated appeal, including the closure of the remaining 13 transit centres; ceasing all forms of harassment; and increasing Government funding for humanitarian programmes. Most importantly, both parties to the conflict must desist from using military strategies that directly affect civilians and ensure that humanitarian agencies have unhindered and continuous access to all affected populations.

The war is the root cause of the humanitarian crisis in Angola. We are working closely with the office of Under-Secretary-General Gambari to seek additional means of supporting the Government in its efforts to find a solution to the crisis. In this respect, as part of our United Nations plan for action on Angola, in the coming weeks I will dispatch my Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Ross Mountain, to Angola to prepare the way for my own visit later this spring. During my visit, I intend to take up priority issues with the Government, including, most importantly, the implementation of the agreed goals and strategies that the Government committed itself to in 2001.

Another action I would like to mention in this regard is, as members of the Council may be aware, the recent establishment of a unit on internal displacement within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I have asked this unit, which is dedicated to strengthening the international response to internal displacement, to address Angola as one of its top priorities this year.

I have already mentioned that there has been a rapid increase in internally displaced persons. Last year, the number of internally displaced persons was five times higher than anticipated. Despite this increase in humanitarian needs, only 47 per cent of the $233 million requested in last year's Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal was received. While acknowledging the need for the Angolan Government to be encouraged to implement the agreed goals and strategies, I would also like to urge Member States to remember Angola, and urge even more strongly that they give generously and immediately to the 2002 Appeal. I would like to seek the support of the Council to this end — to give generously, and to give now.

Ultimately, the solution to the humanitarian crisis in Angola is the end of the war. We know that there have been some positive developments on the political front. The window of opportunity that currently presents itself is of great importance, and every effort must be made to arrive at a durable and just solution. We look to the Security Council in particular for innovative and courageous solutions to end the war, and it is my sincere and strong hope that every possible channel is being explored in order to assist the Angolans in achieving peace. Only then will the tragic and protracted humanitarian situation in Angola begin to dissipate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Oshima for the very useful and timely information he has brought to the Council on the humanitarian situation and the difficult conditions in Angola. I also thank him for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola.

Mr. Chikoti (Angola): Allow me, in the name of my Government, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to congratulate your predecessor on the brilliant manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the Council during his mandate.

The holding of this meeting of the Security Council to address the humanitarian situation in Angola is reflective of the concern of the international community in this regard. This is the second time that I have addressed the Council within a period of two weeks in order to discuss issues concerning conflicts in Africa and their consequences. This is indicative of the deep commitment of this body of the United Nations in its efforts to find solutions to achieve stability on the African continent.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to reiterate my Government's appreciation for the efforts of the Security Council to find a solution to the situation in my country. We would especially like to thank Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for his personal dedication and the interest he has demonstrated in seeking peace for Angola.

My Government is aware, as are the nations represented here, of the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in our country, which, contrary to our expectations, worsened during 2001. Judging by the number of important delegations from the United Nations that visited us, we note that these developments are being followed with great interest. We will certainly remember that, in May of 2001, President José Eduardo dos Santos reiterated to the nation and to the international community the need for a resolution of the conflict based upon a peace plan.

In this context, the Government considers the following points essential to achieve peace: first, the unilateral and unconditional cessation of hostilities on the part of Jonas Savimbi's troops and the turning over to the United Nations of all of their weapons; secondly, the resolution of UNITA's internal problems by UNITA itself; thirdly, the conclusion of the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, in accordance with the evolution of the situation; and fourthly, the holding of and participation in general elections.

The Government's plan to which I have just referred calls upon UNITA rebels to respond positively so that we can put an end to this atrocious war and conclude the tasks that remain to be completed under the Lusaka Protocol as a way to restore the long-awaited peace. Instead, in response to this Government initiative, Jonas Savimbi's forces increased their terrorist acts — acts that are still fresh in the memory of many Angolans and, indeed, in that of all those who have witnessed the magnitude of those atrocities.

Allow me to take this opportunity to present images that illustrate, on the one hand, the effects of these acts of terrorism on the Angolan people and, on the other hand, the efforts of the Government to reverse the situation. Some of the images may be a little hard to watch — but that is the reality with which we live.

A videotape was played in the Council Chamber.

Mr. Chikoti (Angola): Those are some of the images that we wanted to bring to the attention of the Council.

Faced with the intransigence of Savimbi's UNITA, and UNITA's failure to respond to any of the appeals for a resolution of the conflict by means of dialogue, my Government has no alternative but to implement its peace agenda, which provides for political, economic, social and military actions.

In the political sphere, the Angolan Government finds itself in the awkward and unprecedented position of being the only country in the world where the largest opposition party maintains a presence in the Parliament while carrying out an active rebellion against the established constitutional order. In spite of all this, the Government has kept intact the pillars of our emerging democracy, ensuring its citizens' exercise of their rights while allowing national dialogue without any exclusion. In fact, discussions continue in the Angolan Parliament with regard to the adoption of a new constitutional law that takes into account proposals originating from all political parties represented in that sovereign body — a constitution that will establish the rules for the holding of the upcoming elections.

In the economic sphere, an International Monetary Fund-monitored reform programme aimed at ensuring macroeconomic stability in our country is under way.

This year, for the first time in Angola's history, our national budget allocated 21 per cent of its funds to

social and welfare-related programmes, in contrast to the 11 per cent allocated to defence and security. This reflects a significant change in national priorities and a pattern that confirms the importance that the Government attaches to the social welfare of the population.

Further, this is also a reflection of the impact of sanctions on UNITA, which have made it more difficult for UNITA to pursue its military option and to procure military hardware and other equipment. It is therefore important for the international community to maintain and strengthen the sanctions as a deterrent as well as an encouragement to return to the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol as a basis for a sustainable political solution to the crisis.

In the military sphere, to counter the terrorist activities carried out by the UNITA rebels — as we have seen in the images just shown — the Government has undertaken measures to guarantee the effective control of its national territory and the extension of the State's authority, in compliance with its constitutional responsibility to ensure the safety of all communities across the country.

A climate of relative confidence is emerging that is encouraging many people, including soldiers of the rebel group, to return to normal life. But their return has overwhelmed an already saturated public assistance infrastructure, raising by more than half a million the number of those in need of emergency aid, making an overall national total of more than 4 million displaced persons, representing approximately 25 per cent of the country's population. That places the humanitarian situation at the centre of our concerns; for that reason, as the Council is well aware, the Republic of Angola is one of the few countries that has adopted a specific law which provides rules for the resettlement of displaced persons.

In that regard, the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 2002 contains a clear strategy that seeks to ensure that the provision of assistance takes into account the principles stated in the constitution of the Republic of Angola and the international guidelines. Educational programmes to promote respect for human rights have been conducted in close collaboration with the human rights division of the United Nations Office in Angola and have covered the various echelons of the armed forces and the national police.

The Government continues to lead and implement humanitarian support operations in close coordination with the United Nations. To that end, it has created appropriate structures at both the national and the provincial levels.

In characterizing the humanitarian situation in Angola, I would like to call attention to the major constraints that the Angolan Government and its partners face.

The first relates to food and other basic needs.

The second concerns roads and bridges. Here, it is necessary to note that, in spite of the Government's effort to rebuild roads and bridges during the short period of peace that we experienced in 1991 and 1992, most of these have again been destroyed as a result of the post-electoral conflict.

Thirdly, the poor condition of airstrips constitutes another major concern of the Government. The most serious cases have already been identified and specific measures for their repair have been taken, most notably the airstrip in Kuito because of its importance.

The fourth area is demining. We have seen an almost total halt in the mine clearance programme. This has had a negative impact on other areas, such as programmes for resettlement and for the distribution of agricultural land.

Fifthly, the response from international donors to the 2001 Consolidated Appeal represented only 46.8 per cent of the expected amount. The fact is that this constitutes an important setback in terms of our expectations.

In order to improve the quality and the quantity of humanitarian assistance through its coordination mechanisms, the Government organized a decentralized format to carry out its national emergency programme for humanitarian assistance by transferring total responsibility for implementation to the provincial governments, which were allocated resources amounting to $12.5 million. For 2001, the Government allocated to the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration $17 million for various existing programmes, in particular for humanitarian assistance. With the aggravation of the situation during the final quarter of last year, the Government reinforced that funding with an additional $6.5 million to acquire food and other items in the national market to assist people in newly liberated areas.

Eight days ago, my Government held an extraordinary session of the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers to discuss the country's humanitarian situation. At that session, the Government adopted a set of measures to expand the assistance it has been granting to secure medical aid, medicine and food for the neediest populations. Moreover, and parallel to the implementation of its programme of emergency humanitarian aid, the Government will continue to implement the resettlement and demining programmes, as well as vaccination campaigns against polio, measles and meningitis and campaigns aimed at the prevention of endemic diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and HIV/AIDS.

The Government is also determined to increase medical and auxiliary personnel in critical provinces, especially Bié. Another priority is the repair of infrastructure, such as bridges, airstrips and roads, in order to facilitate the timely provision of humanitarian assistance, the settlement of people and the free movement of people and goods. In the area of transportation, existing fleets will be reinforced with more trucks.

Given the large number of displaced persons, the Government approved a programme, budgeted at $60 million, which targets the provinces of Moxico, Huila, Uíge, Huambo, Kuando Kubango, Kwanza Sul, Bié, Lunda Norte and Malange.

My Government is aware, as are its partners, of the temporary and transitory nature that these emergency assistance programmes must assume. From that perspective, and in the light of the significant improvement in the military situation, we intend to accelerate the resettlement programmes for displaced persons with the implementation of activities that will allow the transition from a state of emergency to one of social and economic development leading to the eradication of poverty.

Among the measures to reduce poverty and strengthen national reconciliation efforts are soon-to-be-implemented pilot programmes aimed at socially reintegrating demobilized soldiers and the general population of displaced persons. The Government and the United Nations have already jointly approved terms of reference for these pilot programmes. We are currently at the stage of selecting the experts who will prepare them. This measure will implement the recommendations contained in the latest reports of the United Nations technical missions that recently visited our country.

Let me end by saying that the Angolan Government believes that the efforts it has been developing should continue to enjoy the support of our international partners. We therefore reiterate our appeal to donors; we expect that their response to the 2002 Consolidated Appeal to be more significant, in order to respond to the growing needs and numbers of internally displaced persons in our country.

We further reiterate our conviction that only by means of a coordinated, continued and effective approach to the humanitarian situation, with the full participation of the Government, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the targeted population, shall we overcome these challenges.

I cannot conclude without reaffirming to OCHA, in Angola as well as in New York, our recognition of the altruistic work it has done in our country and express our deepest appreciation to the donor countries and to all in the international community who, in one way or another, have provided support to the Angolan people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Vice-Minister for External Affairs of Angola for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): We are very grateful to Under-Secretary-General Oshima for providing us with such a detailed briefing on the humanitarian situation in Angola. It is very timely. Much of the focus of the Council's recent discussions on the situation in Angola has been on political developments. Ireland is very mindful that, even in the event of a much-hoped-for positive political development in the coming months, the humanitarian conditions in the country will remain at a crisis level. We should therefore ensure that too much time does not elapse before members again discuss the crucial humanitarian issue.

We are very grateful also to hear of planned action by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs over the coming months.

We welcome to the Council today the Vice-Minister for External Affairs of Angola, Mr. Georges Chikoti, and the delegation that has travelled with him from Luanda. The Minister is the latest high

representative of his Government to attend a meeting of the Security Council. His presence further demonstrates the strong relations that exist between Angola and the United Nations. This fourth meeting of the Council on Angola in a period of six months also highlights the great concern there is here for the situation in his country. I very much agree with Minister Chikoti that the humanitarian crisis is at the centre of our concerns.

The facts outlined by Mr. Oshima are truly bleak and distressing. This is all the more so given that we had expected measurable improvement in the humanitarian crisis in 2001. Instead, it deteriorated. Primary responsibility for this continuing tragedy rests squarely on the shoulders of Savimbi's UNITA. Over the past year, the predicted improvements in access to the enormous at-risk population and in relation to the resettlement of displaced persons failed to materialize. In fact, the internally displaced population increased well beyond projected levels, thereby preventing any large-scale resettlement programmes. All this has been taking place against the backdrop of the Government's establishing control over wider territory and increasingly effective application of the Security Council's sanctions against UNITA. Concerned observers suggest that increased military and state control should result in increased humanitarian reach and they can only be disappointed with the direction of events.

It would be ungracious not to recognize the steps made and the promises undertaken by the Government of Angola. We are fully aware that the conditions in which it operates are far from ideal for the normal implementation of economic and social policies that will improve the lives of the citizens of Angola. We also acknowledge that there is on its part a growing awareness of and, importantly, an increasing willingness to discuss the responsibilities of the Government of Angola towards its people.

When the Council met here in September with the Minister of the Interior of Angola, Mr. Dias dos Santos, Ireland was very struck by his acknowledgement that his Government had to do more in support of the civilian population and by his expressed concern regarding a perception that international donor fatigue might set in with regard to Angola. In this respect, we also noted his comment that the Angolan Government could not fairly be expected to cope alone with the humanitarian challenges which it is facing. We are pleased to have heard Minister Chikoti's description today of the recently announced immediate efforts his Government is making to address the very most urgent dimensions of the humanitarian emergency. We would welcome a future opportunity for the Council to examine and to measure with the Government of Angola the effectiveness of those measures.

Some of the problems outlined by Mr. Oshima are particularly worrying. Access to the at-risk population has not improved in the past year. If anything, it seems to have deteriorated. The circumstances facing the authorities in Angola are, without doubt, very difficult, given the tactics employed by UNITA. However, every effort must be made to ensure effective and sustained access for those seeking to alleviate the crisis faced by the Angolan people. When it proves impossible to provide safe access for the international community to provide assistance, the Government must do everything possible to provide the assistance itself. Each and every Angolan must be treated equally in this regard and all efforts must be made to reach everyone everywhere.

We are also concerned about the additional displacement arising from military actions. We would be grateful to hear more about how the affected people are being assisted and whether other measures are being planned for those who might be displaced in the future. We would also be grateful to learn more about the composition of these displaced populations, given worrying reports that a low proportion of young males appears to be among them.

We understand very well the call by Minister Chikoti and Mr. Oshima for the international donor community to remain engaged in Angola. Ireland's emergency and rehabilitation assistance to Angola has increased steadily over recent years and Angola has been consistently among the largest recipients of such aid from Ireland. Many of our humanitarian non-governmental organizations are also present on the ground. I mention this to underline that Ireland is deeply conscious of and engaged with the plight of the Angolan people and the conflict they have endured for far too long.

There is an enormous humanitarian deficit in Angola which cannot be bridged without the assistance of the international community. In this regard, the donor community is not avoiding its responsibilities. However, it can be encouraged to do more. There is also a major opportunity and responsibility for the

Government of Angola to play its own central role in addressing the humanitarian deficit. The donor community can reasonably be expected to further support humanitarian action if it sees the systematic diversion of greatly increasing state revenues from natural resources into programmes to rebuild Angola for the people of Angola, who are the natural owners of those resources. We make the case that this should be done not only for the welfare of the people — the clear and absolute first priority — but also to strengthen the perceived legitimacy of Angola's institutions and state structures.

We cannot address the humanitarian crisis in Angola without reference to the violent conflict that underlies it. Ireland fully supports the mediating efforts of the Secretary-General and of his Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Ibrahim Gambari, to establish a process of political dialogue. We very much hope that these efforts will lead to progress soon. We also want to record our strong support for the work of the United Nations Office in Angola.

The ending of the conflict in Angola would not in itself bring about the end of the immense economic and social obstacles facing the country. However, increased confidence on the part of the Angolan people that the arrival of peace holds out the promise of greater economic and social progress will surely contribute to the creation and endurance of stability. That is why Ireland believes that the Government of Angola, the United Nations and the international community must continue our work to improve greatly the humanitarian situation in Angola. That agenda must be asserted systematically by all concerned, and now, despite the continuing conflict situation. It is an agenda that cannot await the hoped-for end to the conflict. It is an agenda to be addressed now by all of us together.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to thank the Emergency Relief Coordinator for his excellent presentation.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict that has gripped Angola for 27 years now. The information available to us confirms that, despite the fact that some progress has been achieved in the last few months, the situation not only remains extremely serious for a large percentage of the population, but has deteriorated considerably.

One of the major challenges facing the country is the considerable increase in the number of displaced persons and refugees, who now exceed 4 million, or a third of the total population. It is clear that the Government has the primary responsibility for the return and resettlement of internally displaced persons. We encourage the Government to continue the initiatives it has taken with a view to resettling some 500,000 people.

Bulgaria welcomes the efforts made to improve the living conditions of the most-affected displaced persons in transit and food centres, temporary sites and refugee-hosting centres. We believe that a great deal remains to be done in order to alleviate the suffering of those most affected.

Another point I deem particularly important is the need to provide easier access to people in need in many areas of the country. Despite the concrete results achieved in the south, the north and the central region, the serious deterioration of the situation in 20 areas that are difficult to access, especially in the western provinces, remains a source of concern. The Angolan Government must ensure access to all parts of the country and guarantee minimum conditions of security for humanitarian agencies, in order to consolidate the delivery of assistance. We encourage the Government to do more in this respect.

Bulgaria also welcomes the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal to support the Angolan Government in its economic recovery. We would like to emphasize strongly that the democratization of the country is a prerequisite for coping with Angola's serious problems.

Bulgaria commends the various humanitarian organizations, in particular the World Food Programme, for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the affected people. We solemnly appeal to UNITA to refrain from using violence and to begin to respect the security and integrity of humanitarian convoys and personnel. UNITA bears the main responsibility for the humanitarian disaster, and the international community must continue to bring pressure to bear on it through sanctions and other appropriate means.

We remain deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Angola, especially with respect to areas where military operations are taking place. It is a sad fact that 60 per cent of Angolans do not have official papers or identity cards. The Council must encourage the initiatives taken by the Angolan Government aimed

at raising the awareness of the main actors in this area and establishing concrete protection measures. The Angolan authorities must do their utmost to put an end to all acts of violence.

Bulgaria welcomes the progress that has been achieved in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. We would like to emphasize the importance of an integrated approach in helping displaced Angolans, and we would like also to commend the efforts made by the Special Coordinator on internally displaced persons.

My delegation fully agrees with the high-level Inter-Agency Network missions' assessment of the nature and magnitude of the assistance requirements of internally displaced persons. We take note of the creation of a national intersectoral commission on demining and humanitarian assistance, and we call on the Under-Secretary-General to devote particular attention to the implementation of the second plan of action.

We would like also to note encouraging signs with respect to the participation of civil society in the search for a solution to humanitarian problems. Given their immense potential and their increased efforts, religious and community groups, women's groups and special-interest organizations are important actors that have considerable influence and can bring pressure to bear on the two principal parties to the conflict. They have an important role to play in efforts to raise public awareness of humanitarian principles and of human rights violations. We support the efforts of the Angolan Government to establish a mechanism to integrate these entities into the process of political dialogue.

It is clear that the evolution of the peace process in Angola is at the heart of the matter. I think that this meeting represents a good opportunity to make headway in this respect and to give it fresh momentum by adopting appropriate measures along these lines.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I warmly thank the Under-Secretary-General for the very useful and detailed briefing he has given us this morning and Vice-Minister Chikoti for his interesting presentation.

It has been nearly 18 months since the Security Council was last briefed on the humanitarian situation in Angola, so the discussion we are having this morning is not just timely; I think that it is overdue. The humanitarian problems in Angola are among the worst in the world.

It is quite clear from the briefings that we have heard that this situation requires the concentrated attention of both the international community and the Government of Angola. The Government's own figures, circulated today, show the extent of the problem that we are facing: half a million people fled their homes afresh in 2001, and 560,000 people in eight provinces cannot be reached by the United Nations agencies.

The recent efforts made by the Government of Angola to improve the humanitarian situation are very welcome, but much more needs to be done, as Under-Secretary-General Oshima has made very clear. The international donor community also has an important role to play in improving the humanitarian situation. It is therefore right for the Security Council to inject a strong note of urgency into this debate and into the search for an end to the internal conflict. We welcome Mr. Oshima's intention to visit Angola this spring.

What is really required is a coordinated approach by all parties working in Angola to alleviate the suffering of the Angolan people. This coordinated effort should lead to positive action — easily measured, substantive and clear improvements in the humanitarian situation. Access to populations in need through improvements in security and infrastructure would ensure the delivery of much-needed humanitarian relief.

I think that we all noticed, when we looked at the map on the screen during Mr. Oshima's briefing, how much white there was on the map — areas that cannot be reached by the agencies — some of them quite close to Luanda itself.

The international donor community has to respond better to the 2001 United Nations Consolidated Appeal, which so far has not yet reached the necessary level of funding, before it addresses afresh the appeal in 2002.

At the same time, we have to support energetic efforts to end the civil war, not least those led by the Secretary-General and Ambassador Gambari. The United Kingdom also strongly supports the work of the United Nations Office in Angola.

I should like to put a few questions to Mr. Erick de Mul, through Under-Secretary-General Oshima.

First, we would welcome the assessment by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the extent to which the Angolan Government contributes to the humanitarian relief effort in financial, political and other inputs, including military efforts; and secondly, whether these inputs have changed either way over the last six to 12 months.

The continuing conflict in Angola is directly affecting far too many Angolans. UNITA clearly has minimal concern for the humanitarian effect of its operations. The Security Council's consideration of the situation in Angola today is an important opportunity to focus now on the practical steps that need to be taken to relieve a situation that shames Angola and the international community.

The proposals made by OCHA this morning are an important start to that process. We also look forward to the discussion in the Security Council next month, under Norway's presidency, of the aide-memoire that OCHA is preparing on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and our exchanges on Angola this morning are entirely relevant to that more general debate.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Oshima for his informative briefing this morning. Let me also welcome to this meeting the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola.

Norway recognizes the positive steps taken by the Government in connection with the joint strategy for humanitarian assistance. Particularly important is the adoption of a rights-based strategy in the 2002 United Nations Consolidated Appeal. This is to ensure that assistance is provided in accordance with core principles of the Angolan Constitution and on the basis of international standards. We would like to encourage the Government to continue its positive efforts.

It is now essential that the Government elaborate an agreed monitoring mechanism for the implementation of priority actions set out by the Government. These priorities include preparation for access to places with internally displaced populations by opening roads and airstrips, improving and increasing humanitarian assistance in areas not accessible to international humanitarian partners, extending State administration to areas controlled by the Angolan Armed Forces, preparing return and resettlement plans for displaced populations, establishing reception and registration centres in areas with large influxes of internally displaced persons, in accordance with Government regulations issued on 15 January this year, and improving health assistance and the supply of essential medicines, personnel and drug kits in provincial capitals and rural municipalities to address the critical health and nutritional situation of newly arrived internally displaced persons.

Having stressed those points, it is important for me to emphasize that Norway stands ready to respond quickly to help meet the great humanitarian needs in Angola. We urge the rest of the international community to do the same.

Let me conclude by saying that humanitarian emergencies in Angola have reached an unacceptable level. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing military activities. Humanitarian problems emerge faster than it is possible to solve them. There is no military solution to the conflict in Angola. Everyone concerned must realize this and act accordingly. In this regard, it is important to point out that the main responsibility for ending human suffering in the country rests with UNITA and Jonas Savimbi. UNITA must stop its violent activity, hurting so many innocent civilians, and it must seize the existing opportunity for dialogue. Dialogue is the tool for finding a lasting political solution. Let me, in this regard, also express my Government's support for the efforts made by the United Nations, and especially the Special Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari.

Mr. Ocaziones (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank Mr. Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola for their presentations on the disturbing humanitarian situation in Angola.

In my delegation's view, we are faced with a situation that has enormous humanitarian dimensions, and yet it is a situation that perhaps receives less publicity than do those in other parts of the world. The description of the conditions and the figures provided us here are disturbing: 4 million persons internally displaced by war, which is almost one third of the country's population; over 1 million people surviving on rations provided by humanitarian agencies; 480 children under the age of 5 dying daily; and more than 60 per cent of humanitarian aid being transported by aircraft because roads are unsafe or have been

destroyed. And what concerns us most is that there are no signs of improvement.

That is why it is timely that the Security Council has decided to focus attention on this serious situation. We have taken note of the fact that 10 United Nations agencies are already in the country, under the coordination of Mr. De Mul, working with the Angolan Government to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. There are grounds for hope that the appeal issued to the international community to finance this year's humanitarian projects will be responded to generously by donors.

What, then, are the tools available to the Security Council to respond to the crushing humanitarian situation of the people of Angola and to try to alleviate it?

First, we certainly believe that focusing attention on this situation with urgency is something positive that we can do. Secondly, we must also continue to support the initiatives of the Secretary-General and Ambassador Gambari aimed at facilitating a solution to armed conflict. Thirdly, we must continue supporting the international sanctions regime against UNITA until its fighting capability has been curbed and eliminated. However, these are medium- and long-term measures. It is possible that by the time they take effect, many more people will have died and the path of national reconstruction will have become more difficult. Therefore, we are duty-bound to do more. In the current atmosphere, our efforts will certainly influence the ability of relief agencies to reach more people and to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. We feel profound admiration for the humanitarian staff, and we wish to contribute to facilitating their work.

Accordingly, my delegation would like to address two questions to Mr. Oshima about the humanitarian situation in Angola. The first question is, as you see it, Sir, is this the right time to explore once again the idea of agreeing on the establishment of a humanitarian corridor to facilitate access for humanitarian workers to persons in need and to facilitate land-based transportation of aid? It is concerning that there is large number of people whose situation is unknown because of the difficulty in reaching them.

The second question relates to the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. My delegation would like to know how these Principles, which have already been incorporated into Angola's domestic legal statutes, are being implemented in the provinces and how useful they are proving in providing humanitarian aid, as well as in protecting the human rights of the Angolan people. I would appreciate Mr. Oshima's comments in this regard.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I consider this discussion to be very useful, thanks to the briefing provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) through Mr. Oshima. From the information provided by Vice-Minister Chikoti, we know that the humanitarian situation in Angola is extremely alarming; hence the usefulness of today's debate.

I do not wish to repeat everything that Mr. Oshima said. However, when a third of the population of a country is displaced, when a tenth survives only because of humanitarian assistance and when hundreds of thousands of people find themselves in a critical situation, we must discuss the issue in such a way as to enable everyone to act together. We are well aware of the cause: it is conflict, the responsibility for which falls mainly on UNITA. We must therefore keep up the pressure on UNITA.

The international community and the Angolan Government are searching for an appropriate response to this humanitarian crisis. We welcome the new commitments of the Angolan Government — the significant increase in assistance to the population in distress. We believe that the Government must make an even greater commitment to the struggle for survival of the people concerned. However, the modalities of the new governmental programme must be clarified, particularly as they relate to the time frame, and we would be pleased to receive more information from Vice-Minister Chikoti in this regard.

We would also welcome comments from Mr. Oshima or Mr. De Mul on the recent initiatives taken by the Angolan authorities with regard to resettlement, demining and the opening up of areas, initiatives taken on the basis of recommendations by humanitarian organizations.

I have another question to ask Mr. Oshima. There have been allegations about the forced movement of the population, and I would be interested in receiving further information from OCHA about those allegations. Indeed, if people are forcibly displaced, that clearly has disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Generally speaking, we would like to see greater access to people in distress. Areas controlled by the Angolan Government could be further opened up to humanitarian organizations. In insecure areas, assistance could be made more secure by the use of strong military escorts provided by the Angolan authorities, which would allow greater access to those zones. Finally, there is a third part of the territory — areas under UNITA control or very isolated and dangerous areas. We believe that, as the representative of Colombia said, we could consider the idea of establishing humanitarian corridors.

I would like to ask Mr. Oshima about how feasible such corridors would be. Of course, the Government of Angola would need a guarantee that such corridors would not be used by the rebels. On the other hand, if the Government of Angola were to accept the idea of humanitarian corridors, that would obviously be a gesture of encouragement to the population. It would also be in keeping with the current efforts being undertaken by the Angolan Government and by Mr. Gambari — efforts that France fully supports — with a view to relaunching the Angolan peace process on the basis of the Lusaka Protocol. In that context, even an indirect discussion between the two parties on the establishment of humanitarian corridors would be a first step that could prove decisive for the return to the peace process.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today. We are very grateful to Mr. Kenzo Oshima for his briefing on the humanitarian situation in Angola. We would also like very warmly to welcome to this Chamber the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola and to thank him for his important and comprehensive statement. We are also very pleased to see here among us Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, whose presence we salute and whose contribution to the search for a solution in Angola can never be overemphasized.

My delegation remains very concerned about the very precarious humanitarian situation in Angola today — a situation that is continuing to worsen day by day and is being further exacerbated by the atrocities committed by those who continue to reject peace and every effort at reconciliation. We had the opportunity to witness the gravity of the situation from the video projection that we watched this morning, as well as the one we watched in the Chamber last September. Those video projections showed the extent of the violence and suffering being inflicted upon innocent Angolan civilians.

Nobody could remain insensitive to the scale of impunity in Angola. There is little doubt that the primary responsibility for the situation lies with Mr. Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA group. The terrorist activities of UNITA and its leader remain the major cause of the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons there. Given what we saw in the videotape this morning, I think it is very appropriate that we place the activities of Jonas Savimbi in the same context as the attack on the World Trade Center and the tremendous international coalition to fight terrorism. I think that that is where we need to take the question of Savimbi.

The innocent people of Angola have been held hostage by UNITA for too long. It is important that every effort be deployed to spare them further suffering and to prevent UNITA from carrying out any further attacks on civilians. We believe that one way of doing that would be to tighten still further the sanctions against UNITA.

The statistics on the humanitarian situation in Angola are alarming. Last year, the Government and the United Nations estimated the total number of internally displaced persons to be approximately 3.8 million, of which 1.9 million were receiving assistance. With the recent fighting reported in the province of Moxico and elsewhere in Angola, the number of displaced people continues to grow. The United Nations Children's Fund has reported that a quarter of Angola's population is internally displaced and that most such people are living in camps. This has led to a plethora of problems. The food security situation remains fragile, and malnutrition is a significant underlying factor in the deaths of thousands of children and women in Angola.

We recognize the tremendous efforts being made by the Government of Angola in improving the humanitarian situation through its resettlement plans and by making available additional funds to tackle the increasing influx to urban areas of internally displaced persons. We also congratulate the Government for incorporating the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into its national legal framework. We also commend the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the churches, which are

playing an important role in providing humanitarian assistance to people in need. We encourage the Government, local NGOs and the churches to continue providing such assistance to the needy people.

We also greatly value the contribution of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations in relieving the dire humanitarian situation of millions of Angolans. We call on them to continue the delivery of much-needed emergency relief assistance. We also call on the international community to render the necessary financial support.

In this regard, I refer to Vice-Minister Chikoti's statement that the response of international donors to the 2001 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal represented only 46.8 per cent of the expected amount. This indeed constitutes an important setback for the expectations of the Angolan Government. We call on the international community to contribute generously to this appeal fund.

The frequent acts of violence by UNITA and the problem of access are major obstacles for the agencies as they continue to deliver assistance to those in need. The international community should make it clear that those responsible for hindering the access of humanitarian personnel to the needy will be held responsible for their actions. We also wish to stress the importance of guaranteeing the security and safety, as well as the freedom of movement, of humanitarian personnel.

We would like to express our gratitude for the courage and determination of those who are working to relieve the human suffering in Angola, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and other agencies. It is vital that all these humanitarian agencies work in close cooperation and in coordination with the Government of Angola, as well as with the civil society, to effectively alleviate the suffering of the population.

Finally, I would like to ask OCHA whether it thinks the Security Council can do more to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground in Angola.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): We join others in thanking Mr. Oshima for his excellent briefing and for the comments expressed regarding the very important work done by his team. We also join others in welcoming the Vice-Minister's presence here today and thanking him for his very important statement. Finally, we associate ourselves with Mauritius's comments regarding the very important work of Ambassador Gambari, who knows full well that he has always had our unstinting support.

I have only two questions to ask, because all the comments we wanted to make have been covered by other colleagues, especially with regard to the very serious humanitarian situation in Angola.

First, the Government's current military campaign against UNITA unfortunately appears to have resulted in a significant increase in the number of internally displaced persons in the affected areas. The World Food Programme reported that in the Bié province alone, more than 12,000 new internally displaced persons were registered in January. We wonder if any information can be provided on how the Government will be tackling the consequences of this fighting.

My second question relates to whether any overtures have been made to UNITA to facilitate the work of the humanitarian agencies, and if so, what UNITA's response has been thus far. Perhaps the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs could also give an assessment of the prospects for UNITA's facilitating such humanitarian work.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I will be very brief. First of all, like other colleagues, I would like to thank Mr. Oshima for his briefing. We would also like to thank Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, for his important statement.

The humanitarian situation in Angola is a source of great concern to us. We have noted that the United Nations and other international relief organizations are carrying out activities there and that the Angolan Government has taken actions in response. We hope that these efforts will be effective as soon as possible and that the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal will receive sufficient funding.

The humanitarian situation in Angola is related closely to the security situation and the peace process there. As far as the Security Council is concerned, we must redouble our efforts to promote the peace process. Only thus can the humanitarian situation in the country be alleviated. The Angolan Government has many

times expressed its readiness and willingness to achieve national reconciliation and peace.

It is regrettable that the armed faction led by Savimbi has continued its violent activities, thus sabotaging the peace process in Angola. This is unacceptable. It is necessary for the international community to exert pressure on UNITA. We appeal to Savimbi and the armed faction under his leadership to respond to the Angolan Government's peace initiative by laying down their arms and starting peace negotiations with the Government as soon as possible.

The Chinese delegation supports the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other international relief organizations. We also support the efforts of Ambassador Gambari, Special Representative of the Secretary-General. For our part, we will also work for the peace process in Angola.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting to consider the humanitarian situation in Angola.

We would also like to thank Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his detailed and candid briefing, which illuminated the humanitarian situation in Angola. I became acquainted with his humanitarian spirit during the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva last year.

We would also like to thank Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, for clarifying his Government's role in seeking peace and security in Angola.

I was under the impression that UNITA's ability to continue waging a conventional war had been greatly diminished. However, the fighting in Angola continues. As a result, the activities of UNITA groups in several parts of the country are still having devastating effects on the humanitarian and social situation in Angola and the Angolan people.

In this regard, we would like to express our concern over the dark humanitarian picture drawn for us by Mr. Oshima and the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, and also by the reports of humanitarian agencies indicating that large numbers of the population have been displaced by the war.

We all heard Mr. Oshima's statement and saw his maps illustrating the number of internally displaced persons in 2001. The statistics indicate that some 500,000 people can be expected to be displaced in 2002 if the increase continues at the present rate. Many people are dependent on food aid, and the situation of children is extremely critical: it is feared that measles, polio, tuberculosis and other diseases could spread. What makes the situation worse is the how difficult it is to gain access to those in need because of the poor security situation in provinces where the Government is unable to guarantee security, particularly in urban areas under UNITA control. Another factor is the poor state of repair of transport infrastructure, roads, bridges and airstrips. All of this is an obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as borne out by the maps that Mr. Oshima showed us this morning.

UNITA must stop threatening the security of humanitarian assistance convoys and must facilitate the delivery of such assistance throughout Angola. Here, it is worth noting that the sanctions have resulted only in an escalation of UNITA's attacks against civilians in Angola; the Council must therefore seriously consider ways and means to put pressure on UNITA and on the sources of its military supplies, with a view to putting an end to the provision of such supplies and to UNITA's attacks against the Angolan people, and with a view to compelling UNITA to move towards reconciliation as a basis for ending the war and establishing the stability that Angola needs. UNITA and Jonas Savimbi bear responsibility for the deteriorating situation in Angola. This reflects that group's lack of commitment to the peace process and to the Lusaka Protocol. UNITA's escalating military activities run counter to efforts to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

My delegation welcomes the Angolan Government's renewed commitment to the Lusaka Protocol, its initiatives to enhance the peace process and its intention to find a solution to the conflict, as stated today by His Excellency the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola. That solution would be built around a peace plan based on a number of points, which he enumerated in his statement. Such a plan would stabilize the situation in Angola.

We welcome the special measures taken by the Government of Angola to fulfil provisions of the Lusaka Protocol that remain to be implemented, including disarming UNITA armed groups and

extending State authority throughout the national territory in order to protect the Government of national unity and reconciliation and to create a climate conducive to the reestablishment of order, to the establishment of a constitutional order and to preparations for elections.

We appreciate the efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community to bring peace and stability to Angola. We join the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola in urging the international community, especially the donor community, to provide generous assistance to the Government and the people of Angola, and to put pressure on UNITA with a view to establishing the stability that is so earnestly desired. Here, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General and of his Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, in the search for peace and stability and for an end to war in Angola.

I have two questions for His Excellency the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola. His Government has a plan for resolving the conflict in Angola; in the light of his statement that UNITA has escalated its military activities and its weapons purchases, how does he view the real prospects of implementing the peace plan that his Government has proposed? And what practical role does he feel the Security Council could play?

I also have one question for Mr. Oshima. In his view, what are the reasons for the 22-month delay in repairing the Kuito airstrip?

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Today's meeting is most timely. My delegation welcomes the delegation from Angola led by Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for External Relations, and thanks Mr. Chikoti for the useful information he has provided about the situation in Angola, including its humanitarian dimensions. Our thanks go also to Mr. Kenzo Oshima for the superb work he has been doing and for the invaluable information he has shared with us today.

As members know, the conflict in Angola is among the oldest crises in Africa; it may be the oldest of all. And because of its scale and its subregional dimension, it has caused profound suffering to the Angolan people. With the signing of the Lusaka Protocol and the many initiatives that have been taken, we can acknowledge that progress has certainly been made, but the situation remains alarming, particularly in the humanitarian sphere. Guerrilla activities have exacerbated the situation in several provinces, leading to the internal displacement of more than 4 million people out of a population of 12 million. That is the sombre picture that was sketched for us this morning. Obviously, the statistics are shocking; as Mr. Oshima said in his briefing, they are among the worst in the world.

Above and beyond the many difficulties currently facing the people of Angola, the restoration of peace, in our opinion, is of the essence. Guinea encourages all parties to do all they can to compel UNITA to abide by its commitments to ending the suffering of the Angolan people. Guinea supports the encouraging measures undertaken by the Angolan Government to address the situation. I would even say that these measures have often been very courageous, as the Minister related earlier, such as the permission granted to an armed group to sit in Parliament as an opposition party, even as it continues to wage guerrilla activities. We believe that this is a very brave initiative on the part of the Government.

Guinea welcomes the invaluable support of the humanitarian agencies on the ground and calls for greater coordination of their efforts. My delegation appeals to the international community speedily to help meet the urgent needs on the ground, particularly the repair of infrastructure; the establishment of reception, health care and food centres; the implementation of a reintegration plan to alleviate the problem of crowding in transit centres and camps; an increase in food assistance by enhancing the capacities of the World Food Programme; support for the work of the Government on the urgent need to improve access to isolated areas and, in particular, to the most vulnerable populations; the strengthening of security in the reintegration areas; and the protection of the civilian population.

As I said at the outset of my statement, the Angolan conflict has lasted too long and caused too much suffering. Every effort should be made to maintain pressure on UNITA with a view to ending the conflict swiftly. The sanctions against UNITA must be maintained and additional measures should be considered to ensure that they are effectively respected.

Finally, Guinea encourages the initiatives and efforts of the Secretary-General and his Adviser for

Special Assignments in Africa, our brother Ibrahim Gambari, to pursue their efforts towards a speedy end to the conflict.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes your initiative, Sir, of convening a meeting of the Council on the humanitarian situation in Angola. This is an issue to which my country attaches the greatest importance.

We were pleased to hear the comprehensive and very instructive briefing by Mr. Kenzo Oshima on the matter. We also welcome the presence of Vice-Minister Georges Chikoti and thank him for his statement and for the very useful information he provided.

The ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Angola is of serious concern to my delegation. Approximately 4.1 million people, a third of the population of that country, are currently displaced, while many Angolans are refugees in neighbouring countries. This situation is due primarily to the ongoing hostilities in Angola, caused notably by the persistent refusal of UNITA to engage in the peace process and to adhere to the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol. My delegation feels that it is therefore essential to maintain pressure on UNITA and to strengthen the sanctions regime imposed on it.

The endless war, which has brought unspeakable suffering to the people of Angolan for many years, has claimed many victims and had tragic humanitarian consequences. Precarious security conditions brought about by intensified fighting have caused people to flock to urban centres and stripped them of their property and employment. The malnutrition, mortality and morbidity rates are high among the displaced populations. The situation is even more tragic for those living in areas inaccessible to humanitarian agencies. UNITA's deadly attacks on civilians and humanitarian agencies are indescribable and unacceptable. Last year's train attack, which claimed so many victims, is only one horrendous example.

We are very pleased by the efforts of the Angolan Government to assist the displaced populations and to facilitate access for humanitarian agencies to people in need. It is important that those efforts be pursued, in particular with respect to the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, the reintegration of displaced persons and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We call on the international community substantially to increase its assistance to the Angolan Government in order to alleviate the suffering of the victims of war, inter alia, through support for the implementation of emergency plans of action for each province. In that regard, the fate of populations in inaccessible zones should be the focus of particular attention. We cannot stress strongly enough the fact that everything must be done to protect civilians, ensure the security of humanitarian convoys and guarantee the safety of humanitarian personnel.

The humanitarian situation in Angola is heavily linked to its political and security situation, particularly to the ongoing fighting in that country. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Mr. Gambari, to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Angola. We are also pleased by the work of the United Nations Office in Angola and of the humanitarian agencies on the ground.

I have one question for Vice-Minister Chikoti. I should like to know his view on measures that the Security Council could take to reduce UNITA's capacity for harm. I should also like to have information from OCHA on assistance programmes specifically designed for children, who, we know, are the principal victims of the tragic situation in Angola.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Mexico.

My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his exhaustive report on the humanitarian situation in Angola. My country is also grateful to Mr. Erick de Mul, Humanitarian Coordinator for Angola, for having joined us.

Mexico appreciates the efforts of the United Nations Office in Angola to restore peace, to provide humanitarian assistance and to promote and protect human rights as indispensable elements of the rebuilding of that nation. In that context, my delegation is ready to support the request of the Angolan Government for the United Nations, in the event of an acceleration in the peace process, to assist in the implementation of a plan for demobilizing combatants and resettling internally displaced persons and to support Angola's electoral process.

My delegation also welcomes the presence among us today of Mr. Georges Chikoti, Vice-Minister for

External Relations of Angola. His participation in this meeting reflects the interest and concern that the Government of Angola shares with the international community over the extremely serious humanitarian situation, by which we are all preoccupied. My country notes with appreciation the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Angola on 5 February to improve the situation and hopes that they will be implemented forthwith.

As Mr. Oshima pointed out, the humanitarian situation in Angola is of the highest gravity and has significantly deteriorated, increasing the number of internally displaced persons. Therefore, Mexico appeals to União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to stop its military activities against the civilian population and to commit itself to reinitiating a constructive dialogue with the Government of Angola to achieve peace. Mexico also appeals to the Government of Angola to fully implement the law on norms for resettlement. It also recommends to the Government of Angola and UNITA that they negotiate the safe access of humanitarian organizations to the most vulnerable groups of Angolan society, particularly in the provinces of Bié, Huila, Uige and Lunda Sul.

Mexico believes that in order to overcome humanitarian problems, it is necessary to achieve peace through negotiations between the parties to the conflict and to respect the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions. My delegation recognizes the efforts undertaken by the Government of Angola to improve the humanitarian situation in the country and appeals that these efforts be maintained, particularly in the areas of infrastructure rehabilitation, which facilitates the provision of humanitarian assistance, and of providing a safe environment for humanitarian personnel. It encourages the Government of Angola to increasingly coordinate the support of all the political parties and civil society in these efforts. Mexico urges Members States and non-governmental organizations, national and international, to redouble their support to the Government of Angola and to the humanitarian efforts being made there by the United Nations.

We cannot ignore that country's situation, and the international community must unavoidably be engaged. In my country's view, a peaceful resolution of the conflict can make possible a just and lasting peace that will allow the Angolan people to achieve national reconciliation and create the conditions for their development. Thus, Mexico commends the work done by civil society, particularly by the Church, in achieving these objectives.

I wish to conclude by asking Mr. Kenzo Oshima about the activities in Angola of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in dealing with the internally displaced and about the bases on which that work is being carried out.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal): Today I will speak on behalf of the troika of observer States of the Lusaka Protocol — the Russian Federation, the United States and Portugal.

We welcome the Vice-Minister for External Relations of the Republic of Angola to this important discussion. His presence signals the strengthened engagement of the Angolan Government in responding to the needs of the staggering number of internally displaced persons and refugees in Angola, as well as in supporting the ongoing international effort to improve the humanitarian situation throughout the entire country. We note that the United Nations and the Security Council have welcomed these important efforts by the Angolan Government.

Unfortunately, the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Angola, as described in very clear terms by Under-Secretary-General Oshima, may soon dwarf the efforts of the international community and the Government. The humanitarian burden of the war continues to grow and has accelerated in recent months. The estimated number of internally displaced persons is now over 4 million. The number of refugees continues to grow in Zambia, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — over 30,000 in recent months. The conflict is forcing populations to move, often against their will and often with inadequate preparation for their care. We particularly want to register our grave concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the areas of the country where access is most difficult for relief agencies.

The Government of Angola can do more to help its own citizens who are displaced, and we are encouraged to hear the representatives of the Government of Angola recognize that they themselves need to do more for their own people. We welcome recent expressions of intent by the Government to provide more resources in the areas of health, transport and food distribution, and we look forward to these important commitments quickly becoming reality.

We encourage the Angolan Government to take a more active stance in the provision of direct assistance and to fully cooperate in the efforts of the international community to alleviate the suffering of those who are not receiving the necessary assistance. The members of the troika are looking for action and expect the Government of Angola and the United Nations to report back on their progress in addressing the humanitarian situation.

This meeting of the Security Council is proof that the humanitarian situation in Angola is of the utmost concern to the international community. The ongoing conflict has brought unacceptable suffering to the Angolan people and has subjected them to terrible living conditions. If there were no other reason to justify the renewed commitment of the international community to the peace process in Angola, this dire humanitarian situation would be reason enough.

We need to be creative and constructive in finding adequate and appropriate solutions to address the suffering of millions of Angolans, in particular those living in the most remote areas. This must be done in a way that combines efficiency and respect for the basic political principles of the peace process. Humanitarian assistance should not be used to achieve political advantage, and neither should it be withheld or impeded in any way. Access should be ensured for aid workers throughout the country.

We must be practical. There are populations in the territory of Angola that have been unable, until now, to have access to food supplies and basic medical assistance due to the conditions created by the war. The good will of those involved in this process will be measured by how they address the humanitarian needs of the Angolan people. All those involved need to understand that the international community cannot allow the current situation to continue indefinitely. Everyone must show the flexibility to let others act where they are not able to do so.

Without peace and stability there will be no durable solution to the dire humanitarian situation in Angola. We have often stated our conviction that there can be no military solution to the Angolan conflict. The troika of observers to the Lusaka Protocol praises the efforts being made by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, in order to relaunch a dialogue between the parties. The troika is of the opinion that all these efforts must be pursued in the most transparent manner, in order to sustain the confidence of the parties, keeping in mind that the Lusaka Protocol is, and will remain, the sole framework for peace.

We also consider the use of agreed-upon facilitators as a helpful tool to clarify each party's understanding of the current situation. Nevertheless, to move the peace process ahead, the presentation of any concrete proposals in this regard should remain firmly in the hands of the United Nations, as the representative of the international community and the guarantor of the Lusaka Protocol, and through which a future solution must be found.

We once more reiterate that only the practice of good governance, respect for human and civil rights and the delivery of better social and economic conditions to the Angolan people can contribute to bringing the conflict to an end. Within the responsibilities the troika assumed under the Lusaka Protocol, we are prepared to continue to assist the United Nations in its proactive role during this phase of the peace process as long as we are requested to do so.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I note that the comments of the representative of Portugal were made on behalf of the troika of the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Portugal.

I now give the floor to Mr. Oshima to respond to the observations made and the questions asked by members of the Council.

Mr. Oshima: Before responding to the questions raised, I would like to make a few observations.

First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Council for the fact that the Council's attention has been drawn afresh to the humanitarian situation and the plight of the people in Angola, and to the urgent need to take action to address that situation. That is very important. I was also very heartened by the clear and strong message that we heard in this Chamber — a

message that encourages the donor community to be yet more generous in providing assistance to the vulnerable population in Angola.

I also welcome the call by a number of Council members on the Government to do more and to implement the goals and strategies to which it is attached, while acknowledging the actions it has already taken to make more resources available for humanitarian action.

A number of questions were asked about issues that touch upon the daily humanitarian activities in Angola. I would like to ask the Humanitarian Coordinator for Angola, Erick de Mul, to answer some of those questions. I would like first to say that my planned mission to Angola, as well as that planned by my deputy and, possibly, that of Under-Secretary-General Gambari in the near future, will be coordinated so as to take up priority issues with the Government of Angola. Such questions will include access to the vulnerable population; days of tranquillity, which have been under consideration and discussion as a means of addressing some specific requirements for polio immunization; the issue of funding for projects and programmes; the problem of infrastructure, which has been explained; and the question of resettlement of internally displaced persons, among other issues.

Another comment I would like to make is in response to a specific question raised by the Ambassador of Colombia relating to the position the Government of Angola has taken with respect to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In Angola, the Guiding Principles became the basis for minimum standards for the resettlement of internally displaced persons developed by the Government in cooperation with United Nations agencies. In October 2000, the standards were adopted, in a decree of the Council of Ministers signed by President dos Santos, as norms for the resettlement of internally displaced persons. A preambular paragraph states the that Guiding Principles establish general principles governing the treatment of internally displaced persons. So they have been clearly incorporated in part of the national legislation.

I would also like to touch on the question about the way in which the Security Council might be useful to the work of humanitarians. I think that the fact that this meeting is being held today is in itself very important, as I said earlier. The clearly enunciated message from the Council about the need to do much more in Angola for humanitarian purposes is surely welcome. I would also like to think that the fact that the Council is interested in keeping this issue under review in a constant and sustained manner, rather than just holding a hearing on it — and, indeed, its interest in other severe emergencies in Africa and elsewhere — is, in itself, very important for us humanitarians and, I am sure, for the donor communities.

My office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, stands ready to provide any information or update that the Council may request in this regard. As I indicated, my office will be working very closely with Ambassador Gambari's office on the Angolan situation.

Having made those comments, may I, with your permission, Mr. President, ask Erick de Mul to speak. He is a dedicated humanitarian with a long record of distinguished service in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, where —until very recently when he moved to Angola— he was the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): With a view to completing the response that Mr. Oshima has given to questions put by Council members, I now call on Mr. Erick de Mul, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Angola.

Mr. De Mul: I will be as brief as I can. The question was asked about what is being done in terms of accessing those displaced by military intervention. It depends: if those displaced by military intervention come to camps where they can be attended to, then they will be attended to. But that is not always the case. In certain cases, those people fall through the cracks and are not attended to at all. Again, this refers to the matter of access, which we will talk about with regard to another question.

As to the composition of the displaced, it is very true that often it is skewed, in that we see many children and women, while men between the ages of, say, 16 and 40 years may not be there. I think that what is happening with young males in the case of Angola is no different from what is happening in other countries where there is conflict: young males are probably engaged in fighting or otherwise involved in conflict.

I will turn now to the question of our assessment — the assessment of the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — of what the Government of Angola is putting into the humanitarian effort. I would say that this is the assessment not of OCHA alone, but also of the non-governmental organizations and the donor community.

The assessment is very simple: too little, too late. I think we can be very grateful for the fact that the Angolan Government agrees with this assessment. The proof of this is that a very serious meeting took place last week in which the Government decided to review the situation and came to the same conclusion: too little, too late. Something had to be done, and a whole series of measures was agreed upon and adopted, to be implemented forthwith by the Government.

With regard to the question of whether the military effort has increased or decreased over the past six months, we have the impression that it is increasing. There is more military activity and hence more displacement.

The issue of humanitarian corridors is a complicated one. Corridors are normally easier in situations where there is a kind of stabilized conflict: where two parties hold certain territories in a more stable fashion, you can negotiate corridors. It is a nightmare to do it, but it is possible. The Angolan situation is much more fluid. So I suppose that when we talk about access, we have to look at it in a broader context. If there is a possibility of using corridors, let us try it. However, I think it is much more an issue of the parties, and particularly the Government, accepting the idea that all Angolan citizens are the responsibility of the Angolan Government, and that measures should be taken to try to attend to their needs. In the case of the Angolan situation, it is much easier to negotiate and discuss this with the authorities than with UNITA, with which we have no contact. So access is something we have to continue to discuss with the Angolan authorities.

As for the question on demining, the Angolan Government took an important decision to create an inter-sectoral demining commission, which is now reviving the whole issue of mine action in the country. The commission will be the entity that will set policy and priorities and outsource the activities to non-governmental organizations and other bodies.

There was a question concerning allegations of forced movement of people and the humanitarian consequences. I think it is correct to say that there have been allegations of forced movement of people. It is always difficult to define exactly what that means, and to prove that people are being forced to move is not very easy. The bottom line is, for whatever reasons people move, the consequences should somehow be attended to. In the first place, I think the consequences should be dealt with by the national authorities, particularly the provincial authorities, hopefully supported by the non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system.

With regard to the question on what the Security Council can do, I think that has already been answered by Mr. Oshima.

The question about what we can do to approach UNITA to facilitate the work of the United Nations agencies is a difficult one. We will have to discuss it with Mr. Gambari, because we cannot get in direct touch with UNITA.

How is the Government tackling new displacements? That is a question for the Government, so I will leave it to them.

There was an interesting question about the Kuito airport. Kuito has become something of an international issue: for almost two years, repairs have been somewhat under way but never moving at a normal pace. Many people have tried to find out what is really happening, because the information we have is that funding has been made available to repair the airport. You open one door, you are sent to another door and you go around in circles — there is no answer. Our assessment thus far is that this could well be a case where we have a combination of lack of interest, a capacity problem and possibly, some think — I am going to use a word that perhaps is not often used in this Chamber — probably also a case of corruption. We all hope that the Government will address the issue and make sure that this is resolved soon.

As for Cameroon's question about special programmes for children: there are far too few. Notably, there are very few programmes that deal with street children issues. This must be rectified. Overall, the problems are so overwhelming that it is very difficult to get into details and create specific projects for children.

The representative of Mexico asked a question as to the role of the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) vis-à-vis the situation of internally displaced persons. UNHCR is gradually withdrawing its activities in relation to internally displaced persons, who are increasingly the responsibility of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. UNHCR will remain in Angola and will continue to help the United Nations agencies and the international community work on issues related to the protection of internally displaced persons.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank both Mr. Oshima and Mr. De Mul for their observations and responses.

I shall now give the floor to the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, Mr. Georges Chikoti, so that he may conclude his observations and respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Chikoti (Angola): Many questions have been brought to my attention. I would like to express my appreciation for the spirit of the statements of the members of the Council, in which they have expressed sympathy over the situation in Angola, proposed solutions and raised questions about the critical humanitarian situation in the country. Indeed, I believe that it is a concern of everyone, and I would like to make a few important points.

First, it must be very clear to the Council that the Angolan Government is committed not only to achieving peace by all means at its disposal but also to protecting human life and human rights in Angola and to maintaining a democratic environment and a democratic Constitution. It might not be very easy for many people to understand how difficult it is to keep this balance, to keep institutions working in a democratic environment.

The Council will recall that in 1992 we held elections, and they provided an environment for peace. Twelve political parties participated, all of which are represented in Parliament. Indeed, UNITA is represented in Parliament. However, when the post-electoral conflict started, the Government had no army. I recall that the provisions of the 1991 agreement stated that the two belligerents should disarm. The Government disarmed; UNITA did not.

What we saw from then on — from when UNITA resumed the conflict after rejecting the election results — is an increase in the numbers, because for the first time the conflict was affecting bigger towns and villages, and the amount of destruction was very high. So far, the Government has never had any support, in military terms, from anyone. The Government had to rebuild its army and to maintain the institutions in order to build confidence. We are coming from a situation, in 1992, in which the Government controlled only a few provinces. With the Lusaka Protocol, we wanted to conclude the process; that means no war, and thus no more displaced persons. Unfortunately, that has not been the result.

With respect to UNITA-controlled areas, what the Government is now doing reflects the fact that today UNITA does not control territory as such; the Government has extended its authority to the borders with Zambia and with Namibia. What has happened is that the people who had followed UNITA into the bush are coming back today, because we have established authority in those areas. Most of the country is in fact being liberated. I think that what some organizations have written with regard to the notion of "forced displacement" is something that has to be clarified. There is no forced displacement of people. There are people who are surrendering to Government authority, and there are also people who are willingly coming to Government authority. That is something that nobody expected. Remember that when UNITA controlled certain areas, UNITA, through the violation of sanctions, was getting support from outside and it thus kept people in certain areas. Such people are today coming to Government authority. We think it important that we understand that there are no forced displacements.

The military activities that are going on do not tend to increase the number of displaced persons; they tend rather to increase the authority of the Government, so that we will be able to help the people in those areas. We know that there are areas to which it is difficult to gain access. The military do indeed have access to these today, but the humanitarian organizations do not go there; it is not easy. First, we need to build bridges; secondly, we need to make sure that we have territorial administration in those areas: that is what the Government intends to do. I brought a map to show the methodology we are pursuing in that regard. This principally relates to areas where we are extending our authority to the border with Zambia, where in fact part of the UNITA leadership is located. We are finding that new people who are coming in are in a very, very bad state. I have to point out that when

most of these people — generals and their families — come, we need to put them in hospital for at least two weeks before we can let them go home or stay in camps. That is the situation.

The Government is not saying that there will be no access. In the context of the Secretary-General's efforts, when Mr. Gambari came we discussed this issue with the military. We discussed how well we can coordinate among ourselves, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system in order to provide assistance to those areas. This is what we intend to do: first, we should put Government administration into those areas. But they are areas that were liberated by the military, and the military, along with their military activities to introduce Government authority, is providing humanitarian assistance: it is transporting food to the people it finds; it is transporting medicine to the people it finds. The Government needs to re-establish its administration, because these are areas where there was no Government administration at all — because UNITA does not administer anything in those areas.

The second stage has to be rebuilding bridges — because then we can send trucks carrying food — and rebuilding some of the airstrips. I think that the challenges are greater than a mere question of access. The Government is not saying that nobody can gain access; the problem is that it is difficult to gain access to some of those areas, particularly in the province of Moxico. These are areas where you, first, have the problem of access, but also the problem of population: you do not have as much population. You have 0.5 inhabitants per square kilometre in those areas.

I think there is indeed an openness on the part of the Government to respond, along with the international community, to these things. The Government has already adopted supplementary measures to repair the Kuito airstrip; I think it will be done in due course. I do not believe that part of the statement by Mr. De Mul of the United Nations Development Programme was true — unless there is an appropriate inquiry to determine what the situation is. We believe that what may have happened is that the company that initially should have repaired the Kuito airstrip did not have the technical capacity to do the job. We have to say that most of the equipment must be transported from about 500 to 1,000 kilometres away; the equipment must come from Huambo or Luanda or Benguela. We have now taken supplementary measures to see if we can repair the airstrip.

I have said that, in order to respond to the urgent need for transportation, we will increase the fleets of motor vehicles, which will transport some of the food from Huambo to Kuito and other areas that need it. But this is the rainy season; it rains intensely in those areas, and I believe that for the time being it will not be very easy to continue the repair work. But that is one of the challenges we have to face.

Another question was what the Security Council can do to help reduce UNITA's military capacity. We have been working very closely with the Security Council; we are open to continuing to negotiate through the mechanisms that have been employed by Ambassador Gambari — and we encourage him in that work. But we have also said that it is very important indeed for the sanctions to be maintained. Sanctions have made possible the reduction of UNITA's military capacity. We think that is the only way to make UNITA understand that it must rely on peaceful means to achieve peace.

The time is short, so let me thank you again, Mr. President, for the opportunity to come here today and participate in this debate. I reassure you that the Angolan Government is indeed committed, first and foremost, to maintaining democratic institutions and respect for human rights so that UNITA can be integrated into the process. We want to help UNITA to participate. We should avoid making political interpretations of things that the Government does not intend. There is an environment that provides for all political parties — not just UNITA — civil society, churches and, above all, the traditional authorities, which are not generally mentioned. Angola is not only a Catholic country. There are also traditional people, representing a large segment of our population, whom we think should be part of this process.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4473

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4473rd meeting

Wednesday, 13 February 2002, 1.55 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Katzarski
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Ms. d'Achon
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Smyth
	Mauritius	Mr. Jingree
	Norway	Mr. Egge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Mr. How Lip Cheng
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-25196 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General upon his assumption of the position as Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as well as its appreciation to all the personnel of UNMIK for their untiring efforts in ensuring the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999.

"The Security Council notes the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government, including the inauguration of the Kosovo Assembly following the elections on 17 November 2001 in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It calls on Kosovo's elected representatives to resolve the deadlock over the formation of executive structures of the provisional self-governing institutions and to allow the functioning of those institutions, in accordance with the Constitutional Framework and the outcome of the elections which expressed the will of the voters. It supports the development of cooperation between UNMIK, Kosovo's elected representatives and the authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Such cooperation is vital in implementing resolution 1244 (1999).

"The Security Council reaffirms the fundamental importance of the rule of law in Kosovo's political development and condemns any attempt to undermine it. It supports all efforts of UNMIK, together with the international security presence (KFOR) and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), to combat all kinds of crime, violence and extremism. It supports the measures taken to bring persons responsible for criminal acts to justice, regardless of ethnic or political background. It calls upon the elected leaders of Kosovo to cooperate fully with UNMIK and KFOR in promoting the rule of law and a multi-ethnic Kosovo with security and freedom of movement for all."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/4.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4474

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4474th meeting

Thursday, 21 February 2002, 3 pm

New York

President:	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Raychev
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Bhuckory
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Foo
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Identical letters dated 20 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/182)

Letter dated 20 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/184)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-25984 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Identical letters dated 20 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/182)

Letter dated 20 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/184)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representative of Israel took a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, the representative of Yemen took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 February 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/186 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Thursday, 21 February 2002, regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the request dated 20 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2002/184, and to the request dated 20 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, document S/2002/182.

I should also like to draw attention to documents received so far during the month of February, namely, S/2002/185, S/2002/175, S/2002/174, S/2002/165, S/2002/164, S/2002/155, S/2002/146 and S/2002/142.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the Council will hear at this meeting a statement by the Secretary-General. Thereafter, I, as President of the Security Council, will make a statement on behalf of the Council.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: The news from the Middle East is grim. Day by day, the toll of dead and wounded on both sides mounts. Day by day, the bitterness and mutual distrust between Israelis and Palestinians intensifies. Increasingly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict risks sliding towards full-fledged war. Truly, we are nearing the edge of the abyss.

During the past seven days there have been more than 60 deaths on both sides. Unless something happens to change the dynamic, it is all too likely that violence will escalate still further. Particularly

alarming is the growing belief, among both Palestinians and Israelis, that there can be no negotiated solution to the conflict. As we all know, hopelessness and despair tend to lead to more extreme measures, with tragic consequences for the region.

Eighteen months after the beginning of the second intifada, the cost to both Israelis and Palestinians grows ever higher in terms of human suffering, bitterness, disillusion and mistrust. The key problems remain occupation; security — the need to end violence, including terrorism; and economic deprivation and suffering. These are interlinked problems, encompassing the political, security and economic domains.

Yet even at this darkest of hours, there is still room for hope. In the midst of the bitterness and the despair, with clamour on both sides for revenge and for ever more desperate and reckless measures, there is a path back to the negotiating table — if the parties choose to take it.

Let us not forget that the parties have agreed, in principle, that there is a way out — namely, the Tenet understandings and the Mitchell recommendations. Taken together, these documents defined an array of security, economic and political measures that would have moved the parties back to the table to negotiate the fundamental issues that divide them.

However, "in principle" is not "in practice". In fact, as we know, the parties have not implemented either of these plans. If Tenet and Mitchell have not failed, they can certainly not be said to have succeeded. Clearly, the situation that is now unfolding requires urgent steps, moving beyond a discussion focused on how to pursue Tenet and Mitchell.

New thinking and imaginative new ideas are now being proposed from several quarters. This is to be welcomed, and such ideas should be considered promptly and thoroughly, both by the parties and by the international community. A reduction in the violence is the most immediate priority. But I have become more and more convinced that trying to resolve the security problem on its own cannot work. Security cannot be dealt with in isolation; it has to have a context. It has to be addressed alongside key political issues, particularly the question of land, and economic and social issues, including the increasingly critical, desperate conditions of the Palestinians.

Failure to address these issues together will only spawn new and perhaps deadlier exchanges of reciprocal violence. Unless both parties have a political horizon on which their hopes for peace and an improved livelihood can be based, there will be no enduring ceasefire. It is imperative that both parties exercise maximum restraint, particularly with regard to attacks against civilians. It cannot be overemphasized that both parties must adhere to their obligations under international law to protect the basic rights of civilians, including the right to security.

The lack of mutual confidence between the two sides makes a third party role essential. The breakdown of trust is so total that neither side will believe the other when it comes to the implementation of agreements. I truly believe that it is imperative for the Security Council and the wider international community to work in a concerted manner with the parties towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

As the Council knows, I and my representative have throughout been in very close contact with leaders on both sides, in the region and among the international community. However, in light of the gravity of the situation, I have asked my Special Coordinator, Terje Roed-Larsen, to intensify his consultations with the parties and with members of the "Quartet", as well as with regional and international actors.

The outlook is bleak. But the present course of events is not irreversible. There is a high road — which the parties themselves were on not so long ago — as well as a low road. Let us do everything in our power to persuade the parties to pull back from the brink and return to the high road.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as President of the Security Council.

I thank the Secretary-General, in my capacity as President of the Security Council, for the frankness, clarity and sense of urgency with which he set forth his thinking, as well as that of his envoys, on the situation in the Middle East. One thing that we all share with him is that we repudiate violence — it resolves nothing. We regret the vicious circle and spiral of aggression and death in the Middle East — in Palestine, Israel and the occupied territories. We share

his view that the situation is intolerable and entails serious risks for international security. We deplore the suffering of the civilian population, the loss of human life and the destruction. All of us want to do something to bring it to an end. We support the United Nations presence in the conflict scenario. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General, and we are concerned about the safety of personnel deployed throughout the region. The concern and dedication that the Secretary-General brings to his work does honour to the Organization.

This meeting, at which we heard from the Secretary-General about the serious situation in the Middle East, is part of a process. Not without difficulty, the members of the Security Council reached agreement on holding periodic consultations as to the situation in the Middle East, based upon information and points of view afforded us by the Secretariat. We have already met informally on two occasions. We are now meeting publicly, as a preamble to the debate that we have agreed to hold shortly.

That is why the members of the Council have preferred not to speak on the situation in Palestine or on the role that the Security Council might play. We look forward to that debate. The effort that we can make to contribute to peace, to resolve the conflict and to halt the bloodshed will be an essential part of our deliberations. The delegation of Palestine and the Group of Arab States have asked us urgently to convene a meeting to discuss and consider their proposals. We will do so as soon as those proposals are ready.

Meanwhile, the members of the Council welcome the words of the Secretary-General. We shall analyse his opinions and consider his suggestions. On that basis, and in consultation with our capitals, we shall prepare to argue our positions and, above all, to propose new initiatives. We will make a great effort to resolve our differences. We all want to give the Organization and the Security Council the opportunity to become part of the solution as of today.

As we explore, together with the Secretary-General, new ways for the United Nations to become active in the Middle East, we share the conviction of the Secretary-General and of Secretariat officials that essential elements of peace-building are the political will of the parties, confidence-building between them, prudence and mutual consideration. Without these, any international effort will prove futile. In doing our utmost to achieve such understanding, we will be living up to our own responsibilities and fulfilling our Organization's mandate.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I intend to adjourn the meeting now and will convene the next meeting on this item after further consultations with members of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4474*

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4474th meeting

Thursday, 21 February 2002, 3 pm

New York

President	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
Members	Bulgaria	Mr. Raychev
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Bhuckory
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	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

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02-25984* (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

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There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representative of Israel took a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, the representative of Yemen took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 February 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/186 and which reads as follows:

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I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the letter dated 20 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2002/184, and to the letter dated 20 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, document S/2002/182.

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his view that the situation is intolerable and entails serious risks for international security. We deplore the suffering of the civilian population, the loss of human life and the destruction. All of us want to do something to bring it to an end. We support the United Nations presence in the conflict scenario. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General, and we are concerned about the safety of personnel deployed throughout the region. The concern and dedication that the Secretary-General brings to his work does honour to the Organization.

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In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I intend to adjourn the meeting now and will convene the next meeting on this item after further consultations with members of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4475

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 February 2002

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4475th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 February 2002, at 11 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 4475th meeting, held in private on 25 February 2002, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)'.

"In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the President invited the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the representatives of Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to participate in this meeting.

"The Security Council heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

"The members of the Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Spain (on behalf of the European Union and associated States) and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations had a constructive discussion."

02-26053 (E) 250202